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American Antiquarian Society

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OF
JOHN QUINCY ADAMS,
1811-1814

EDITED BY
CHARLES FRANCIS ADAMS

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CORRESPONDENCE OF JOHN QUINCY ADAMS, 1811-1814

In the year 1812 literally the whole world was at war. Beginning with the capture of the Bastille, June 14, 1789, the convulsions which marked and followed the French Revolution of 1789, known as the Napoleonic wars, had entered upon their final phase in October, 1812, when the retreat of the French army from Moscow began. That phase culminated at Waterloo thirty-two months later, June 15, 1815.

For the United States the period was one of tension and humiliation. During it, disunion was freely agitated, and in 1814 steps preliminary to a secession of the New England States from the Union were taken.

James Madison was inaugurated as the fourth President March 4, 1809. One of the earliest acts of Madison after taking office had been to nominate John Quincy Adams to represent the United States at the court of St. Petersburg. Two years previously the Czar of Russia, Alexander I, then thirty-five years old, had agreed with Napoleon to the Treaty of Tilsit, so-called, theatrically signed on a raft moored in the river Niemen, by virtue of which a temporary arrangement in the nature of a peace was brought about between the two potentates. Napoleon was then at the zenith of his career, and this treaty had been rudely broken by him in the summer of 1812. The disastrous Russian campaign and the War of 1812-15 between the United States and Great Britain were thus contemporaneous. The last named War came to a close at the end of 1814, [December 25th] less than six months before the battle of Waterloo.

The residence of J. Q. Adams in Russia [1809-1814] covered the whole of the period of Napoleon's Russian

experience, as also his campaign during the subsequent year, 1813, intervening between the retreat from Moscow and Waterloo. The official position held by Mr. Adams was consequently at the very center of conflict during the four most troubled years of the nineteenth century. Throughout that period there was a constant interchange of familiar family letters, so far as the facilities for such an interchange then existed, between St. Petersburg and Quincy, the home of the Adams family in Massachusetts. These letters, relating exclusively to events contemporaneously occurring in Russia and America and to characters now become historical, have never seen the light. The letter, for instance, from H. Q. Adams to his mother, Mrs. John Adams, describing a long interview with the famous Madame de Stael in St. Petersburg, was written on the day preceding that on which the great battle of Borodino was fought,—September 7, 1812.

In those exceptionally troubled times the transmission of letters between Europe and America, never either safe or rapid, was carried on under difficulties and restrictions now not easy to realize. In the first place, no real international mail service, in the modern sense of the term, then existed. In the second place, what is now known as post-office "sanctity" was systematically ignored. Letters, whether passing through the post or in private hands, were opened or subject to seizure by officials in nearly every country. To such a degree was this the case that in a letter written from St. Petersburg to his brother, Thomas Boylston Adams,¹ J. Q. Adams observed:—"Almost every letter I write is opened and read either by French or English officers." Letter-writing, therefore, had to be marked by a great degree of discretion. This is apparent in the letters of Mrs. John Adams to her son. In one of them, dated from Quincy, July 29, 1812, she says:—"The declaration of

¹ Thomas Boylston Adams, second son of John Adams, born in Braintree, Mass., September 15, 1772, graduated at Harvard in the class of 1790, was a representative from Quincy in the General Court of Massachusetts, [1805-06] and Judge of the Court of Common Pleas of Massachusetts [1809-11]. He died in Quincy, 12 March, 1832. Accompanying his father to Europe a boy of seven, in 1779, he had been put to school in France and Holland. Returning to America in 1781, subsequently, when in 1794, J. Q. Adams was appointed minister at the Hague, T. B. Adams went with him in the capacity of Secretary of Legation. He returned to America in 1800.

war by the United States against Great Britain, the necessity for which is deplored, renders the communication between us so hazardous that I despair of hearing from you or conveying intelligence to you. * * *

We have not any letters from you of a later date than the 4th March, and we wait in anxious expectation of hearing. I have written to you by various opportunities, and I could now fill many pages with subjects which ought to come to your knowledge of a political nature, if I did not feel myself restrained by the desire I have, that this letter may reach you, as it contains no subject to gratify the curiosity of any one and can be only interesting to yourself as a testimony of the health of your friends." And again, writing under date of November 30th following, she says:—"Your letters of April 30th, of May 28th, of June 27th, a duplicate which we could not read so faint was the press copy, and your letters of July 8th and August 10th have all safely arrived, the two last upon 19th of this month, and gave us the more pleasure, as we had despaired of hearing again from you during the winter. It is almost a forlorn hope to expect any communication between us. The war between France and Russia on the one hand, and America and England on the other, leaves few chances for private correspondence. If while peace existed so little regard was had to letters addrest to a publicke minister that they must be broken open and family and domesticke concerns become the subject of public investigation, there can be but little satisfaction in writing; notwithstanding that blundering Irish Lord Castlereigh denies the fact, I cannot expect more respect or civility when the nations are hostile to each other. Should this be destined to similar honor I request Sir William or any of their Lordships to awaken in their own Bosoms some natural affection and kindly forward this letter to the son to whom it is addrest, and whom three years absence from his parents and children render it particularly necessary that it should go with safety."

J. Q. A. to Thomas Boylston Adams

ST. PETERSBURG, 31 July, 1811.

* * * * * "The time is apparently coming when the temper and character of the American People will be tried by

a test to which since the War of our Revolution they have been strangers. And unfortunately the unparalleled prosperity which for more than a quarter of a Century they have enjoyed has been constantly unfitting them from year to year for the reverse of Fortune which they now have to encounter. The school of affliction however is as necessary to form the moral character of Nations as of individuals. I hope that ours will be purified by it. The prospect of a War with England has been so long approaching us that we ought to have been better prepared for it than we are. It was to prevent this War, which I believed altogether otherwise unavoidable, that I assented to and voted for the Embargo when a member of the Senate. I hoped it would have saved us from the War; I have ever been convinced, and now believe more firmly than ever that it did save us from the War for that time, and postponed it for four years. The same causes which would have produced it then are producing it now, and according to all appearance, if anything can possibly save us from it again, it will be another Embargo.

Whether our Government will have the time or the inclination, or the resolution, to resort to this expedient I do not know—from the Accounts received here from England since the news of the encounter between the *President* Frigate and the *Little Belt*,² measures appear to have been adopted there for the professed purpose of “humbling the Yankies” and a squadron of five ships of the line to be followed it is said by a Regiment of troops, has sailed for America with sealed orders to be opened West of Scilly. Their object will doubtless be known to you long before you receive this letter. Whether it be of mere menace or of direct hostility, I trust the Spirit of my Country will prove true to itself. But it opens in either case a prospect before us at least as formidable as that of 1775 and 1776 was to our fathers.

You tell me that you burnt a letter which you had written me, expressing perhaps too freely your opinions of certain late measures of our Government. Perhaps I ought to have burnt two letters which I wrote you expressing my opinions with regard to the non-intercourse or non-importation Act of the last Session of Congress. I do sincerely respect and honour the motives, and I fully approve the spirit of those by whom it was past. They had given a pledge by the Act of the former Session, which they thought themselves bound to redeem, and they might justly expect that France would carry into effect

² The collision between the U. S. frigate *President* and the British corvette *Little Belt* had occurred off Cape Charles, Va., May 15, 1811, eleven weeks previous to the date of this letter.

her engagements on her part so positively and explicitly stated by the Duke de Cadore.³ But it was my opinion that France had already violated her own engagements in a manner which absolved us from all obligation contracted by the Act of the former Session, and I strongly apprehended that the tendency of the new Act would be to precipitate a War with England. The new incident which has occurred and upon which the accounts of the two parties differ so materially with regard to the facts undoubtedly increases the danger and seems to render the War unavoidable. If the War must come, I hope that the temper and the energy of the Government and People will rise to a dignity and firmness adapted to the emergency. So far as it may be defensive, I can only pray that as our day is, so our Strength may prove. But the first and most important quality for War in my estimation is *Justice*. And may God Almighty grant that we may be careful to keep that on our side. That we may not undertake it presumptuously, nor impelled by Passion; nor without a precise and definite object for which to contend.

This state of affairs is also calculated to turn back my reflections upon myself. It has led me to review my own public conduct in past time, and to consider my prospects and my duties for the future. You will already see that I find in it an additional justification to my own mind for the part I took in relation to our foreign Affairs during the last Session of Congress in which I held a Seat in the Senate. My principle was one which no result of Events could possibly shake. But in respect to *policy*, I always considered the Embargo as justifiable on no other ground than that its only alternative was War. This opinion from the necessity of the thing was *conjectural*. It is even now not demonstrable that War would have followed without it; but if War comes from the same operative Causes, as I believed would have produced it then, I shall certainly consider my reasoning at that time as more completely sanctioned by the Events than I could if it should not ensue.

Since my residence in Russia, our relations both with France and England have taken a variety of turns, and new incidents affecting them have occur'd, but in which it has not been my duty to take any part. I have of course none of the responsibility connected with them upon me. I have had nothing *English* to guard against but *forgery*. My most difficult and important labours have been to struggle against another influence. But let me tell you an anecdote. In the month of

³ Champagne, Jean Baptiste Nompère de, first Duc de Cadore. 1756-1834. Minister of Foreign Affairs under the Empire, 1807-1811.

February last, I heard that there was an American Vessel, somewhere in the river Elbe, going shortly with a special permission from the French Government to Boston. Thinking this might be a good opportunity to write a *private* letter or two (I took special care not to send by that way any public ones) I wrote you on the 5th of March n. 12, and enclosed it together with a Duplicate of n. 11 under a cover directed to my father, and sent it by Post to Mr. Forbes at Hamburg, with a request that he would forward it by the first safe opportunity to the United States.

On the 26th of March Mr. Forbes wrote me that he had received my letter, and should send the enclosures by the Ship Packet *Captain Hinkley*; which was to sail for Boston in a very few days. I congratulated myself on having thus found one more chance of conveyance for my Winter letters and was indulging the hope that my number twelve had reached you at latest in June, untill about ten days since I received a subsequent letter from Mr. Forbes, informing me that a few days previous to the departure of *Captain Hinkley* at 7 O'clock in the Morning his bed chamber was entered by order of the Police, and all his letters amounting only to 7 or 8 were taken from him; and that my letter directed to my father was among them. Mr. Forbes made immediately a written application for the restoration of my letter, but was referred from the Police to the Post-Office, and from the Post-Office to the Police—but never obtained the letter.

You may perhaps have thought me particularly cautious of writing you and my other friends at Quincy upon topics of political interest, and if you receive my letters n. 11 and 12, you may wonder what motive there could be, not for breaking them open, but for eluding the return of them. But I trust you will perceive that I have had sufficient reason for great reserve in writing politicks and that you will find some excuse for letters on subjects which might be thought too trifling for a man of my years and gravity." * * *

J. Q. A. to Thomas Boylston Adams.

ST. PETERSBURG, 25 September, 1811.

* * * * * "The London Newspapers are usually from three to four weeks from their date in reaching this place. And they commonly contain one or more paragraphs of Public news from the United States which have got across the Atlantic in a similar interval of time. It is through this channel that we always receive the most recent intelligence from our Country, though it sometimes comes to us through another secondary medium by transfer into the French or German Gazettes,

which we regularly receive twice a week. They are seventeen days coming from Hamburg; and three weeks from Paris.

It was in a London Paper, the *Courier*, that I first saw the political forgery, pretended to be a letter from the Duke of Cadore, which had originally been published in the *Boston Patriot*.⁴ In addition to the original imposture, which though it first came from America, I hope and believe to have been of English origin, the Editor of the *Courier* trumped up a tale of its having been addressed to the Russian Ambassador at Paris—sent by him to the Emperor Alexander—communicated by the Russian Government to me, transmitted by me to my own Government, and to my father, through whom he says it was first published. And all this without hesitation or scruple—not as a conjecture given as probable—not as a report received from others, but as of unquestionable certainty and incontrovertible fact. I am perfectly sure that the assertion respecting my father is as false as all the rest, but it is utterly unaccountable to me how the Editor of the *Patriot* could have been made the dupe of what appears to me to be so clear an imposition. He says it bears the very image and superscription of the modern Caesar—which only shows how little he is acquainted with that personage, and how open he has suffered his mind to the rank absurdities, and cunning misrepresentations of Englishmen and anglicised Americans. Ames tried to scare all our federal old women out of their senses by telling them with a grave face that he trembled for fear Bonaparte would take his and their children for a conscription against St. Domingo; and Walsh, with a little mincing of the matter, just enough to show that he does not believe a word of it, says that indeed he does not know but—he is no coward—but really there may be some danger of the conscription against St. Domingo. In all this however there is no forgery. Ames's fears raised a Spectre before his mind's eye, which he really believed he saw, and from which he started with a shriek of horror. Walsh affects to partake of his trepidation because he has his purposes to answer by spreading it among others—but the author of this spurious step advances one step further in the righteous Cause. Hobgoblins and prophecies are not highly seasoned enough for his palate. Plain, downright forgery, is his fashion of raising bugbears, and so he puts the Duke of Cadore's name to a jumble of materials as incongruous, and ridiculous as the composition of the Caldron of Macbeth's witches, the result of which is to be, that Bonaparte intends to destroy the English Constitution, and dethrone the house of

⁴ This fabrication, a bitter tirade against Great Britain, appeared in the *Boston Patriot* of June 19, 1811, filling two and one-half columns of the issue of that date.

Hanover, and that he considers the United States, as ruled by *the weakest and most contemptible of Governments*. That such a wretched piece of Patch Work should have pass'd current for genuine among the profound wiseacres of the federal Gazettes, that Russell or Coleman⁵ should have taken or given it all out for Gospel would have been natural enough; but I really should never have suspected quite so much *cullability* in the Editor of the *Patriot*." * * * *

J. Q. A. to John Adams.

ST. PETERSBURG, 29 June, 1812.

* * * * * "It was but yesterday that the account of the first hostilities in Poland reached this City;⁶ no Event of importance is yet known to have occurred; but it is believed impossible that many days should pass without a shock such as perhaps is unparralleled even in the sanguinary modern annals of Europe. What this Event will be, human wisdom cannot foresee; but here it is a moment of profound and gloomy anxiety. And what singularly characterizes the period is that prodigious as the armaments and preparations have been on both sides, not an intimation has been given to the public on either side of any misunderstanding between them. Russia has declared and adhered to the determination not to begin the War, but on the subject of the differences which had arisen between them, there has been a persevering refusal on her part to negotiate at all, the motive for which will doubtless now be assigned, but which as yet is unaccountable."

J. Q. A. to Thomas Boylston Adams.

ST. PETERSBURG, 4 July, 1812.

* * * * * "On the $\frac{12}{24}$ June, the hostilities between France and Russia commenced. The French crossed the river Niemen at four different places and invaded the Russian Territory. The latest accounts are of the $\frac{17}{29}$ when no Event of importance had occurred. A general action must have taken place, or cannot probably be delayed many days longer. We are within three days distance of the news. The forces on both sides are great; and the issue of the conflict will be momentous. It is a period of anxious expectation." * * *

⁵ The personages referred to in this letter are Fisher Ames (1758-1808); Robert Walsh (1784-1859) author of "Letter on the Genius and Disposition of the French Government" (Philadelphia, 1810); Benjamin Russell (1761-1845) editor of the *Columbian Centinel*; and William Coleman (1766-1829) editor of the *New York Evening Post*.

⁶ The French army crossed the river Niemen, near Kovno, Prussian Poland, June 23d, commencing Napoleon's Moscow campaign.

J. Q. A. to Thomas Boylston Adams.

ST. PETERSBURG, 14 July, 1812.

* * * * * "By what singular and unaccountable accident the letters taken from Captain Hinkley last year at Hamburg, ever found their way to you is matter of much more surprize to me than the Seizure of them by the Police at the time. It must certainly be that *generosity*, which your father gives the world credit for, which induced the honourable Seal-Breakers to forward the letters, after reading them, and there is a candour and *bonhommie*, in the enclosure of their own abstract and Translation, which I like much better than Mylord Castlereagh's Report from the Right Honourable the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty that "no letters, public or private, were broken open."

When I first learnt that my number 11 to you had fallen into the hands of the French Police, and that in all probability it had been transmitted to Paris, I very well knew that the paragraph of which the Translation is now in your hands would excite attention, and have a degree of interest there stronger than you could imagine. It referred to Transactions, and to the exertion of an influence with which they were well acquainted, and which had given me more trouble and concern than anything else that has happened during my residence here. When they got the letter the struggle was over, and their objects had been completely defeated. I have no doubt they understood every word of the extract better than you to whom the letter was directed, because they had reports from other sources relative to the same subject, which you have had no opportunity of perusing. His Majesty the Emperor Napoleon occupies himself much more with details of Commerce than you seem to be aware of; and if he does not exactly reason from his informations as you and I might, it is because certain motives enter into the composition of his deliberations, which *we* should not so readily admit.

Mr. John Henry's Correspondence is one of the most instructive political pamphlets that has fallen under my cognizance for several years. Among many other interesting Revelations, it discloses, or at least asserts that the Pleasures and the Indolence of certain Ministers abandon to subalterns the administration of public affairs. One of the great misfortunes of all the old Governments of Europe, and it has not a little contributed to their greatest Calamities of late years, has been precisely this—That their great Men, their Ministers and Generals have been and are Men of Pleasure and of Indolence, and of course that their business has of necessity been abandoned to subalterns. Ignorance of what they ought

to know, has been no inconsiderable source of the blunders which have been punished by such heavy Calamities to themselves. Whatever may be the Vices of France under her new System, this is not among them. She at least is not governed by subalterns. The activity of all her official administrations might teach her enemies a lesson of wisdom, if luxury, sensuality and indolence could learn wisdom from either friend or foe. But when Indolence contends with Toil; when Pleasure wrestles with Diligence, which party think you, will bear away the prizes? I certainly do not approve the manner in which His Majesty's Police obtained possession of my letter; but the extract and translation sufficiently show, that it was not obtained without a purpose, and I incline to the belief that its final enclosure to you was intended as a hint that its contents had not been perused without suitable notice.

The City of St. Petersburg has no longer the honour of being the scene of Negotiations, either political or commercial. The Emperor and his Minister of Foreign Affairs have both been nearly three months absent from it, and now in the political Convulsion which is shaking Europe to its deepest foundations, Russia has once more changed her side, and entered upon the "bloody Arena." The War has been commenced more than three weeks. Of its Events hitherto our information here is not very distinct nor perhaps very accurate. The Russians have been retreating to unite their forces, but nothing decisive of the issue of the Campaign has to our knowledge hitherto occurred."

J. Q. A. to Mrs. John Adams.

ST. PETERSBURG, 10 August, 1812.

* * * * * "The War in the North of Europe has already been marked by an alternate series of successes and disasters to both parties. The French armies have been advancing upon the Russian Territory, untill they have occupied almost all the Polish Provinces within the Russian Dominion. The Russian armies have been retreating before them, without suffering themselves to be drawn into a general Engagement. But in every instance when they have engaged partially, the Russians have been, or at least represent themselves to have been victorious. This City has been three times illuminated within the last week—twice of which three times was for victories over the invading armies. They no doubt have a different story to tell on their part, but notwithstanding the rapidity with which they have penetrated into the Country, and the delay of resistance against them which has been systematically pursued, the Spirit and Confidence of the People here is much greater than it was at the commencement of the Campaign.

Besides the immense armament which they already have on foot, the losses of which as yet have been small, they are now organizing a second line of defence, and preparing to have two or three hundred thousand men, to supply the places of those now in the field, if any serious disaster should happen to them. Numbers of Men will not be wanting to them for any probable emergency. They will form troops easily disciplined, and will receive from England supplies of arms, ammunition, and perhaps Cloathing. If they continue to avoid a general Action, or if engaging in one they win the Battle, there is no doubt but they will drive the Invaders back before Winter beyond the frontiers."

J. Q. A. to Thomas Boylston Adams.

ST. PETERSBURG, 29 September, 1812.

"A War between the United States and Great Britain, and a War between France and Russia, having commenced on the same Week in the month of June last, have concurred almost entirely to annihilate the few and precarious opportunities of Communication with you, which I had previously possessed. *Our* War has banished our flag from the Baltic, and stopped the channel of conveyance through England of which I sometimes availed myself. The French and Russian War has stopped the communication between this place and Paris, by which I sometimes received letters from America, and through which I sometimes wrote. I have had no letter from you, nor from any person in America, since I wrote you last. I seem to be cut off from all intercourse with my Country.

* * * * * "As I know not how, or when, or if ever this letter will reach you, nor into whose hands it may fall, common prudence forbids me to say much on the public affairs of the world. You know my sentiments with regard to the War which has commenced in our own Country. I cannot say that the Declaration was avoidable, when it took place. But I think that its principal Cause and Justification was removed precisely at the moment when it occurred. I have flattered myself with the hope that when the change of policy forced upon the British Ministry by our previous measures, should be known in America, it would still be practicable to arrest the War, at the threshold and to restore us to the blessings of Peace and Neutrality. But my expectations have been weakened by the information of what was passing in America immediately after the Declaration, and now are almost extinct.

A more terrible and destructive War is raging in the heart of the Country where I reside. Three Months have elapsed since the invasion of the Russian Territories, by French armies; and they are already in possession of Moscow. Several

bloody Battles have been fought, with various and alternate success; none of them, however, of a character to decide the Event, even of this Campaign. Neither the People nor the Government of this Country are disheartened by the present aspect of their affairs. They consider the situation of their Enemy as desperate in the midst of his success and entertain not a doubt that they will ultimately expel him and his armies from their Country. The army destined against this City has been repeatedly defeated with such heavy loss that the place is thought secure notwithstanding the occupation of Moscow. Some of the English Inhabitants of the City are however preparing to leave it."

J. Q. A. to John Adams.

ST. PETERSBURG, 4 October, 1812.

* * * * * "But of the War in the Country where I reside you may expect me to speak more at large, and besides the general Interest to which it is entitled, as forming so large a portion of the history of the Civilized World, our residence here may give you a particular concern with it, as our own situation and Circumstances are in no small degree involved in its Events. On the 24th of June the War began; and from that day to this according to the official Bulletins published here has consisted of an uninterrupted series of Russian Victories. We have had *Te Deums*, Illuminated Cannon firing, Bell-ringing, and all the external demonstrations of continual triumph, while the French armies have been advancing with rapid and steady pace, untill on the 15th of September, the very day that my poor child died, they took possession of Moscow, the antient and renowned Metropolis of the Russian Empire. The real progress of military Operations has been known very tardily, and only by the dates from time to time of the Official Reports from Head Quarters. It is not prudent to have the knowledge of disasters, when they have happened—still less to anticipate those that may come. The private Correspondence from the armies, must tally with, or at least not materially vary from the official Reports, of the Commanders in Chief. *Discretion* is one of the most universal Virtues, in Governments organized like this, as the Want of it is one of those the most surely and severely punished. The concealment and disguise practised to keep the knowledge from the public of facts which it would be disagreeable to them to know, give rise however to many rumours of defeat and misfortune still more unfounded than the official Reports of Victories, so that between flattering misrepresentations, on one side, and fictitious alarms on the other, the real state of

Affairs is perhaps better and sooner known in the other hemisphere than here as it were upon the very scene of Action.

There, however, a spectator has the opportunity of witnessing the impressions produced upon the public mind, by the course of the War, which could not be so well observed at a distance. The hopes of the Russians that the issue will be glorious and successful to them are founded, first on their army, and secondly on the natural advantages of their situation. To judge of the Operations of their Generals from their measures it would seem that their sole Instructions are on no consideration and in no Event whatsoever to risk any essential disaster to the army. To abandon everything else rather than stake the army upon the chances of a Battle. This system is cautious, and perhaps the best that could have been adopted, but it gives an appearance of timidity to all their warlike operations, singularly contrasting with the boldness and impetuosity of the invader, and which he has not failed to turn to his own advantage. Twice on the passage from the river Niemen to Moscow the Russians appear to have determined to meet their Enemy in Battle, and on both occasions they assert that the field of Battle was theirs. But the fear of hazarding the safety of the army, has not only prevented them from profiting by their success, but has induced them to yield to their vanquished antagonist all the fruits of Victory. For the Battle of Borodino, St. Petersburg was illuminated and a *Te Deum* was performed. The Russian General who commanded at it was made a Field-Marshal, and received a gratuity of a hundred thousand Rubles—and eight days afterwards Napoleon entered Moscow; and the Field-Marshal, with excuse and apology reported to his Master, that notwithstanding his Victory, he had surrendered the Capital, to preserve the army.

But Napoleon is in an Enemy's Country. Hemmed in between four Russian Armies, over whose bodies he must either advance or retreat. Two thousand Miles distant from his own Capital; having lost one half the forces with which he commenced the War, and surrounded in the midst of his Camp by auxiliary armies so disaffected to him and his Cause that at the first symptom of defeat they would more eagerly turn their armies against him than they now follow his banners. Notwithstanding his rapid and hitherto triumphant Career, the hope of finally expelling and even annihilating him and his whole host here grows sanguine in proportion as he proceeds. It is far stronger and more Confident than it was at the Commencement of the War, and the Emperor Alexander, who then pledged himself to his People that he would never make Peace while one armed Enemy should have his foot on the Russian Territory, has since the loss of Moscow publicly

said that none but a *scoundrel* can at the present juncture pronounce the name of Peace."

J. Q. A. to Mrs. John Adams.

ST. PETERSBURG, 24 October, 1812.

* * * * * "If relief could be obtained for actual woe by contemplating the wretchedness of others our distress would indeed be light. There is now scarcely a spot upon the habitable globe but is desolated by the scourge of War. I see my own Country writhing under it, and every hope of better prospects vanishing before me. If I turn my eyes around me, I see the flame still more intensely burning. Fire and the Sword are ravaging the Country where I reside. Moscow, the antient Metropolis, one of the most magnificent and most populous Cities of Europe in the hands of an invader, and probably the greatest part of it buried in ashes. Numerous inferior Cities daily devoted to the same Destruction, and Millions of People trampled under the feet of oppresion or fugitives from the ruins of their habitations, perishing by hunger, in woods or deserts. It is by the slaughter of many thousands, and by the time and chance, which happen to all men, winning the race from the swift, and wresting the battle from the strong, that the spot from which I write has hitherto been saved from sharing the fate of the Capital of the Empire. No one can tell how long it will enjoy this exemption. Its prospects are more favourable than they have been heretofore, and it is now threatened by no immediate danger.⁷ But while the invader shall tread upon the Russian soil, its situation cannot be perfectly secure."

J. Q. A. to John Adams.

ST. PETERSBURG, 5 November, 1812.

* * * * * "To escape as much as possible from the ineffable mortification of this burlesque upon War, I endeavour to persuade myself that it is a new proof that War was necessary to us. We are indeed coping with an Enemy whose naval and military force is so disproportioned to ours that nothing but the consideration of the other Enemies with whom he must at the same time contend, could save us from the sentence of gross and glaring folly for engaging him at all. But in addition to all his other advantages at the outset of this contest he has that of beginning with the skill and experience of twenty years previous War, with the greatest and most formidable Powers, while all our martial metal has been gathering the rust of the same twenty years. With troops and Generals

⁷ The retreat of the French army had begun October 15.

so perfectly raw, and those with which from the nature of things we must enter the field, awkward, unskilful, and unsuccessful operations were naturally to be expected. I was prepared to hear of them; though for such *grinning infamy*^s as this I confess I had not looked forward. If then our military faculty has already degenerated to such excessive debasement, it seems high time for us to have the experiment whether it is yet capable of being retrieved. The Courage of a Soldier, Gibbon says, is the cheapest quality of human nature; but it will often fail, and at the most critical and fatal moment without the aid of use, discipline, and example. If it had been possible for us to avoid a War at this time and even to have enjoyed many more years of Peace, War must after all have come at last, and if we are so disqualified for it now, is it not probable that in the progress of enervation and languor which another long period of inaction would have produced, the very Spirit of Independence itself might have been extinguished, and we should have been really, what Fisher Ames said we were ten years ago, "of all men on Earth, the fittest to be Slaves"?

We live indeed in an age when it is not lawful for any civilized Nation to be unprepared for or incapable of War. Never, with an aching Heart I say it, never did the warlike Spirit burn with so intense a flame throughout the civilized World as at this moment. Never was the prospect of its continuing to burn and becoming still fiercer, so terrible as now. It would perhaps not be difficult to show that the State of War has become indispensable to the existence both of the French and British *Governments*. That in Peace they would both find their destruction. That they both must force outwards those deadly humours of National Corruption, which if allowed to be thrown back upon their own vitals would produce speedy and inevitable death. Add to this, that War has become not only in France but even in England, and Spain, and Portugal, and now in Russia, the great, if not the only Career of Wealth, Honour and Renown. That while the glory of Principalities, Kingdoms and Empires as Rewards of martial achievement, is blazing in the bosoms of men in the higher Classes of Society,

^s Hull's surrender of Detroit had occurred August 16, and the previous day Fort Dearborn at Chicago had been evacuated and its garrison massacred by the Indians, acting in co-operation with the British. "The last vestige of American authority on the western lakes disappeared. Thenceforward the line of the Wabash and the Maumee became the military boundary of the United States in the Northwest, and the country felt painful doubt whether even that line could be defended." (Adams, *United States*, VI, 335.) The equally unhappy and no less discreditable reverses of the, so-called, Niagara campaign did not occur until the middle of the following month, and tidings of them could not have reached St. Petersburg at the time this letter was written. Allusion is made to them in the following extract from a letter of November 24.

the misery and famine which War itself has brought upon numberless multitudes of the lower Classes, is forcing them into the ranks, and filling every vacant spot as fast as the sword can make it. The fruits of Victory by land are no longer exclusively reserved for France—England has at length brought forth a General,⁹ who bids fair to redeem the military Fame of his Country, and to take his stand in History, if not with the Edwards and the Henry's of former ages, at least with the Wolf and the Marlborough of the last.

A more extraordinary phenomenon is here unfolding itself before my eyes. With a standing army of at least five hundred thousand men, the Emperor of Russia, by a simple summons to his people has called forth in less than three months three hundred thousand more, who with the Caftan, and the Beard, and the hatchet, are mingled in among the regiments of smooth-faced, uniformed veterans, and already rivalize with them in martial exploit. Napoleon has taken Moscow, but it is doubtful whether he or his army will ever get back from it. In his attempts upon St. Petersburg and Riga, he has been foiled, and his troops and his marshals have been repeatedly and effectually beaten. Russia has not only discovered a vigour and energy of defence beyond the expectations of both her friends and foes, but she has perhaps discovered to herself a secret of her own strength of which she was not aware. It is not for Riga, Moscow or St. Petersburg that France and Russia are now contending, it is for the dominion of the European Continent. In this Campaign, and while I write Napoleon has exposed and is exposing, many believe to certain destruction, assuredly to the most imminent danger, not only himself and his army, but the whole mass of French Power, accumulated in twenty years of Revolution." * * *

J. Q. A. to Mrs. John Adams.

ST. PETERSBURG, 22d November, 1812.

MY DEAR SIR:

Toward the close of the last summer there arrived here as a sort of a semi official appendage to the British embassy an old acquaintance of yours, Sir Francis D'Ivernois who as you know has been for many years a distinguished political writer in the French language and in the Interest of the British Government. He came not I believe with but very soon after the Ambassador Lord Cathcart.¹⁰ Just at the same time a lady of

⁹ The battle of Salamanca, in which Wellington decisively defeated the French under command of Marshal Marmont, had occurred July 22.

¹⁰ William Shaw Cathcart, created Earl Cathcart July 16, 1814. He had served in the American Revolutionary War, 1777-1780. He was Ambassador from the Court of St. James to that of Russia in 1812-1814.

celebrated fame, Madame de Stael, the daughter of Mr. Necker, was also here on a transient visit.¹¹ As I had not the honor of being personally known to Madame de Stael and as we had just received information of the American Declaration of war against Britain, I had no expectation of having any communication or intercourse either with the Ambassador or the lady.

Early one morning I received a note from Madame de Staël, requesting me to call on her at her lodgings, that same day at noon as she wished to speak to me on a subject respecting America. I went accordingly at the hour appointed and upon entering the lady's *saloon* found there a company of some fifteen or twenty persons not a soul of whom I had ever before seen. An elderly gentleman in the full uniform of an English General was seated on a sofa and the lady whom I immediately perceived to be Madame de Staël was complimenting him with equal elegance and fluency upon the glories of his nation, his countryman, Lord Wellington, and his own. The Battle of Salamanca and the bombardment of Copenhagen were themes upon which much was to be said and upon which she said much. When I went in she intermitted her discourse a moment to receive me and offer me a seat which I immediately took and for about half an hour had the opportunity to admire the brilliancy of her genius as it sparkled incessantly in her conversation.

There was something a little too broad and direct in the substance of the panegyrics which she pronounced to allow them the claim of refinement. There was neither disguise nor veil to cover their naked beauties, but they were expressed with so much variety and vivacity that the hearers had not time to examine the thread of their texture. Lord Cathcart received the compliments pointed at himself with becoming modesty; those to his nation with apparent satisfaction and those to the conqueror of Salamanca with silent acquiescence. The lady insisted that the British nation was the most astonishing nation of antient or modern times, the only preservers of social order, the exclusive defenders of the liberties of mankind. To which his lordship added that their glory was in being a *moral* nation, a character which he was sure they would always preserve. The glittering sprightliness of the Lady and

¹¹ Anne Louise Germaine Necker, Baronne de Staël-Holstein, better known as Madame de Staël, was born at Paris, April 22, 1766, and died there July 14, 1817. Exiled from France in 1812 by order of Napoleon, she visited Austria, Russia, Sweden, and England. She was then forty-six years of age, and at the height of her great reputation. This letter of J. Q. Adams to John Adams is dated the 22d of November, 1812. The interview described, however, and the conversations related took place on the 6th and 8th of the previous September.

the stately gravity of the Ambassador were as well contrasted as their respective topics of praise, and if my mind had been at ease to relish anything in the nature of an exhibition I should have been much amused at hearing a Frenchwoman's celebration of the English for generosity towards other nations and a lecture upon national morality from the commander of the expedition to Copenhagen.

During this sentimental duet between the ambassador and the Embassadress, I kept my seat, merely an auditor. The rest of the company were equally silent. Among them was an English Naval Officer, Admiral Bentinck, since deceased. He was then quite the *chevalier d'honneur* to Madame de Staël but whether the scene did not strike him precisely as it did me or whether his feelings resulting from it were of a more serious cast than mine the moment it was finished and the Ambassador had taken leave he drew a very long breath and sighed it out as if relieved from an offensive burden saying only "thank God that's over." He and all the rest of the company immediately after that retired and left me *tête-à-tête* with Madame Staël. The subject respecting America was to tell me that she had a large sum in the American funds and to enquire whether I knew how she could contrive to receive the interest which she had hitherto received from England. I gave her such information as I possessed. She had also some lands in the State of New York of which she wished to know the value. I answered her as well as I could but her lands and her funds did not appear to occupy much of her thoughts. She soon asked me if I was related to that celebrated Mr. Adams the author of the book upon Government. I said I had the happiness of being his son. She replied that she had read it and admired it very much, that her father, Mr. Necker, had always expressed a very high opinion of it. She next commenced upon Politics and asked how it was possible that America should have declared war against England. In accounting for this phenomenon I was obliged to recur to a multitude of facts not as strongly stamped with British generosity or British Morality as might be expected from such a character as she and the Ambassador had been assigning to that nation. The orders in council and the press gang afforded but a sorry commentary upon the chivalresque defence of the liberties of mankind and no very instructive lessons of morality. She had nothing to say in their defence but she thought that the knights errant of the Human race were to be allowed special indulgence and in consideration of their cause were not to be held by the ordinary obligations of war and peace. There was no probability that any arguments of mine could make any impression upon opinions thus toned.

She listened, however, with as much complacency as could be expected to what I said and finally asked me why I had not been to see her before. I answered that her high reputation was calculated to inspire respect no less than curiosity and that however desirous I had been of becoming personally acquainted with her I had thought I could not without indiscretion intrude myself upon her Society. The reason appeared to please her. She said she was to leave this city the next day at noon. She was going to Stockholm to pass the winter and afterwards to England. She wished to have another conversation with me before she went and asked me to call and see her the next morning. I readily accepted the invitation and we discussed politics again two or three hours. I found her better conversant with Rhetoric than with Logic. She had much to say about social order, much about universal monarchy, much about the preservation of religion in which she gave me to understand she did not herself believe and much about the ambition and tyranny of Buonaparte upon which she soon discovered there was no difference of sentiment between us. But why did not America join in the holy cause against this tyrant? First because America had no means of making war against him, she could neither attack him by sea or land. Secondly because it was a fundamental maxim of American policy not to intermeddle with the political affairs of Europe. Thirdly because it was altogether unnecessary. He had enemies enough upon his hands already. What! Did not I dread his universal monarchy. Not in the least. I saw indeed a very formidable mass of force arrayed under him, but I saw a mass of force at least as formidable arrayed against him. Europe contained about 160 millions of human beings. He was wielding the means of 75 millions and the means of 85 millions were wielding against him. It was an awful spectacle to behold the shock, but I did not believe and never had believed that he would ever be able to subjugate even the continent of Europe. Had there ever been any real danger of such an event it was past.

She herself saw that there was every prospect of his being very shortly driven out of Spain. And I was equally convinced he would be driven out of Russia. It was the very day of the battle of Borodino. "*J'en accepte l'augure,*" she said. "Everything that you say of him is very just. But I have particular reason for resentment against him. I have been persecuted by him in the most shameful manner. I was neither suffered to live anywhere nor to go where I would have gone,—and all for no other reason but because I would not eulogize him in my writings.

As to our war with England I told her that I deeply lamented

it and yet cherished the hope that it would not last long. That England had forced it upon us by measures as outrageous upon the rights of an independent nation, as tyrannical, as oppressive, as any that could be charged upon Buonaparte. Her pretences were retaliation and necessity. Retaliation upon America for the wrongs of France and necessity for man Stealing. We asked of England nothing but our indisputable rights, but we allowed no special prerogatives to political Quixotism. We did not consider Britain at all as the champion for the liberties of mankind but as another Tyrant pretending to exclusive dominion upon the ocean. A pretension full as detestable and I trusted in God full as chimerical as the pretensions of univereal monarchy upon the land. Madame de Staël "was of her own opinion still" but on the point of impressment she owned that my observations were reasonable. I have not yet found a European of any nation but the British who on having this question in its true statement brought to a precise point had a syllable to say for the English side. In conclusion I told her that the pretended retaliation of England had compelled us to resort to real retaliation upon them and that as long as they felt a necessity to fight for the practice of stealing men from American merchant vessels on the high seas we should feel the *necessity* of fighting against it. I could only hope that God would prosper the righteous cause.

Madame de Stael on my leaving her charged me if I ever should be again in any place where she should be at the same time not to neglect paying her a visit which I very willingly promised.¹² She left St. Petersburg the same day. I should ask Sir Francis D'Ivernois pardon. I began this letter with him, but whom can one help deserting for Madame de Stael? I will return to Sir Francis by the next opportunity having now only room to say that I am dutifully and affectionately yours.

J. Q. A. to Thomas Boylston Adams.

ST. PETERSBURG, 24 November, 1812.

* * * * * "You know how deeply I was disappointed at the breaking out of our War, precisely at the moment when I entertained the most ardent and sanguine hopes that War had become unnecessary. Its Events have hitherto been far from favourable to our Cause, but they have rather contributed to convince me of its necessity, upon principles distinct from the consideration of its Causes. The termination of General Hull's campaign in upper Canada is known to us, as far as the

¹² Mr. Adams subsequently met Madame de Staël again in Paris, in February, 1815, during the interim between the abdication of Fontainebleau and Napoleon's return from Elba. See *Memoirs*, III, 153, 155, 165.

English Government have seen fit to make it known, by the dispatches from the Governor General and General Brock, and by the Capitulation. We are informed also of an armistice agreed to by General Dearborn, which the President refused to ratify—and from these two portents I have come to the conclusion, which indeed it was not very difficult to anticipate before, that our projected invasion of Canada will end this year in total and most disgraceful defeat.

The misfortune, considered by itself is not a very heavy one to the Nation. But it is a deep mortgage of reputation to redeem. Its effects upon the Spirits and dispositions of the people present the most important light in which it is to be viewed; and these to my mind are problematical. If the effect upon the national sentiment should be familiar to that of the Chesapeake affair, we shall not have ultimately much reason to regret the disaster of Hull's army, or the failure of our first military expeditions. Our means of taking the British possessions upon our Continent are so ample and unquestionable that if we do not take them it must be owing to the want of qualities, without which there is no Independent Nation, and which we must acquire at any hazard and any loss.

The acquisition of Canada however was not and could not be the object of this War. I do not suppose it is expected that we should keep it if we were now to take it. Great Britain is yet too powerful and values her remaining possessions too highly to make it possible for us to retain them at the Peace, if we should conquer them by the War. The time is not come. But the power of Great Britain must soon decline. She is now straining it so excessively beyond its natural extent that it must before long sink under the violence of its own exertions. Her paper credit is already rapidly declining, and she is daily becoming more extravagant in the abuse of it. I believe that her Government could not exist three years at Peace without a National Convulsion. And I doubt whether she can carry on three years longer the War in which she is now engaged, without such failure of her finances as she can never recover. It is in the stage of weakness which must inevitably follow that of overplied and exhausted strength that Canada and all her other possessions would have fallen into our hands without the need of any effort on our part, and in a manner more congenial to our principles, and to Justice, than by Conquest.

The great Events daily occurring in the Country whence I now write you are strong and continual additional warnings to us not to involve ourselves in the inextricable labyrinth of European politicks and Revolutions. The final issue of the campaign in the North of Europe is not yet completely ascer-

tained;¹³ but there is no longer a doubt but that it must be disastrous in the highest degree to France, and no less glorious to Russia. It may not improbably end in the utter annihilation of the invading army, three-fourths of which have already been destroyed. Whether the Emperor Napoleon will personally escape the fate which has befallen so many of his followers is yet doubtful, but it may be taken for granted that he will never be able again to assemble against Russia a force which can be formidable to the security or Integrity of her Empire. The politicians who have been dreading so long the phantom of universal monarchy may possess their souls in quietness. Never having been infected with the terror of it, I shall derive no new source of tranquility from these occurrences; but I cannot say that my foresight was clear enough to expect that the Colossus of French power would in so very short a period be staggering upon its foundations so manifestly as it is. It is impossible not to consider the internal State of France as greatly depending upon the course of these external Events. The Empire of Napoleon was built upon victory alone. Defeat takes away its foundation, and with such defeat as he is now suffering, it would be nothing surprizing to see the whole fabrick crumble into ruins. France indeed still remains; a formidable mass of power; but into what condition she may be plunged by the overthrow of his Government I am scarcely able to conjecture.

The day of trial to Russia has been severe; but it has been short, and her deportment under it will raise her high in the estimation of mankind. Her plan of defence has the most decisive demonstration in its favour—success—and success under numerous incidental circumstances disadvantageous to her. Not only her armies, but her peasantry, armed and sent into the field as if by enchantment, have fought with the most invincible courage, though not always with favourable Fortune. The chances of War have been sometimes with and sometimes against them, but they have arrested the Career of the Conqueror of the Age, and drawn him on to ruin, even when they yielded him the Victory.”

J. Q. A. to Mrs. John Adams.

ST. PETERSBURG, 30 November, 1812.

* * * * * “It may well be doubted whether in the compass of human history since the Creation of the World, a

¹³ This was written November 24. The terrible passage of the river Beresina by the remnants of the French army occurred between the 26th and 29th of the same month and, six days later, December 5th, Napoleon, at Smorgoni, made known to the French Marshals his intention to leave the army and proceed at once to Paris. He arrived there the evening of December 18.

greater, more sudden and more total reverse of Fortune was ever experienced by man, than is now exhibiting in the person of a man, whom Fortune for a previous course of nearly twenty years had favored with a steadiness and a prodigality equally unexampled in the annals of mankind. He entered Russia at the head of three hundred thousand men, on the 24th of last June. On the 15th of September he took possession of Moscow, the Russian armies having retreated before him almost as fast as he could advance; not however without attempting to stop him by two Battles, one of which was perhaps the most bloody that has been fought for many ages. He appears really to have concluded that all he had to do was to reach Moscow, and the Russian Empire would be prostrate at his feet. Instead of that it was precisely then that his serious difficulties began. Moscow was destroyed; partly by his troops, and partly by the Russians themselves. His Communications in his rear were continually interrupted and harrassed by separate small Detachments from the Russian Army. His two flanks, one upon the Dwina, and the other upon the frontier of Austria were both overpowered by superior forces, which were drawing together and closing behind him; and after having passed six weeks in total inaction at Moscow, he found himself with a starving and almost naked army, eight hundred miles from his frontier, exposed to all the rigour of a Russian Winter, with an Army before him superior to his own and a Country behind him already ravaged by himself, and where he had left scarcely a possibility of any other sentiment than that of execration and vengeance upon himself and his followers. He began his retreat on the 28th of October, scarcely a month since, and at this moment, if he yet lives, he has scarcely the ruins of an Army remaining with him. He has been pursued with all the eagerness that could be felt by an exasperated and triumphant Enemy. Thousands of his men have perished by famine—thousands by the extremity of the Season, and in the course of the last ten days we have heard of more than thirty thousand who have laid down their arms almost without resistance. His Cavalry is in a more dreadful condition even than his Infantry. He has lost the greatest part of his Artillery,—has abandoned most of the baggage of his army; and has been even reduced to blow up his own stores of ammunition. The two wings of the Russian Armies have formed their junction and closed the passage to his retreat; and according to every human probability within ten days the whole remnant of his host will be compelled like the rest to lay down their arms and surrender at discretion. If he has a soul capable of surviving such an Event, he will probably be a prisoner himself.

Should he by some extraordinary accident escape in his own person, he has no longer a force nor the means of assembling one which can in the slightest degree be formidable to Russia. Even before his Career of victory had ceased, commotions against his Government had manifested themselves in his own Capital, on a false rumour of his death which had been circulated. Now that, if he returns at all, it must be as a solitary fugitive, it is scarcely possible that he should be safer at the Thuilleries, than he would be in Russia. His allies, almost every one of whom was such upon the bitterest compulsion, and upon whom he has brought the most impending danger of ruin, may not content themselves merely with deserting him. Revolutions in Germany, France, and Italy must be the inevitable consequence of this state of things, and Russia, whose influence in the political affairs of the World he expressly threatened to destroy, will henceforth be the arbitress of Europe.

It has pleased Heaven for many years to preserve this man, and to make him prosper, as an instrument of divine wrath to scourge mankind. His race is now run, and his own term of punishment has commenced.—“Fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass—for yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be; yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place and it shall not be.” How often have I thought of this Oracle of divine truth, with an application of the Sentiment to this very man upon whom it is now so signally fulfilling. And how ardently would I pray the supreme disposer of Events that the other and more consolatory part of the same promise¹⁴ may now be also near its accomplishment—“But the *meek* shall inherit the Earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of Peace.”

Mrs. John Adams to J. Q. A.

December 30th, 1812.

“Despairing almost of conveying a letter to you amidst the war of Empires and Kingdoms, I have had but little encouragement to write, yet knowing how anxious you must be relative to your Family, your Children, your Friends and Country, I shall make the attempt and trust this letter on Board a Cartel now going from N. York to England hoping that it will be treated with the same lenity with which we treat our Enemies, send them to the place of their destination.

* * * * * We have had our misfortunes and our disasters to contend with, owing to want of skill, discipline and

¹⁴ Psalms xxxvii, 10, 11.

proper arrangement, but we shall learn wisdom by chastisement, and skill by experience. In the meantime we shall have our sufferings to contend with. The defeats we have met with upon the land, in our imperfect attacks upon Canada have been mortifying to us because we have reason to believe they might have been successful. Our Country have been so nobly monumented upon the ocean, by our Hull, Jones and Decatur that we glory in our infant navy, and hope to add a new line to the song, "of rule Britannia, rule the waves," and to convince the self-styled Queen of the ocean that there is a power rising up, not to usurp the title, but to contend for their own rights and to oblige others to yield them. To this and the bill which is now past in Congress to build with all possible dispatch four seventy-four gun ships and six 44 gun frigates, making ten with those already agreed upon, these with those we already have in commission will be sufficient to protect our commerce and teach other nations to respect it also; our navy has already instructed Great Britain in some wholesome truths and it would be much for her interest to listen to them. She may rest assured that this increase of our naval establishment will be the binding chain of the union and she will hear very little more of the cry of N. England for peace if she persists in her injustice. The re-election of Mr. Madison, now certain by a majority of 36 already returned, and of Mr. Gerry who has still more votes, plainly show that altho a great clamour has been excited, and British partizans have been active in fomenting it, yet the great body of the people are united. She needs no other proof of this than the universal applause with which our naval victories have been hailed and celebrated and the honours bestowed upon the conquerors throughout the United States.

We look with sorrow and with heart felt anguish upon the desolation of the "cloud capt Towers and gorgeous Palaces" of that ancient, wealthy, and magnificent city of Moscow. Charles the 12 of Sweden was as brave as Napoleon. May the Emperor Alexander be as fortunate and as successful as the great Peter.

What havock and destruction of the human species! Can man be born then, only to be destroyed by his fellow man. Yet plagues and earthquakes break not Heaven's designs. Are we rational creatures?

J. Q. A. to Mrs. John Adams.

ST. PETERSBURG, 31 December, 1812.

* * * * * "A Mr. Andrew of Salem, left this place about three weeks since, on his return to America. By him I wrote to you and my father; to my brother; and a short letter to my

two sons at Atkinson. Since then I have not heard from you nor from the United States at all. But an English Gazette Extraordinary has informed me of the Surrender, number two—Brigadier General Wadsworth and nine hundred men; to Major General Roger Hale Sheaffe.¹⁵ If we go on at this rate, it is to be hoped there will be prisoners enough in Upper Canada to take it, without needing any fire-arms. I perceive the Indians have the greatest share in the exploits of the British forces against us—Major General Brock was made a knight of the Bath, for taking General Hull, pretty much as Falstaff took Sir John Coleville of the Dale; who “gave himself away gratis.” As General Brock will have no Occasion for his “blushing ribband,” when it arrives in America,¹⁶ the best use that could be made of it would be to give it to *Norton*, who seems quite as much entitled to it on the score of merit and service as the conqueror of Detroit himself.

As this propensity to surrender appears to be an infectious distemper among our troops, I am in daily expectation of hearing the third instance of it, which I hope will be the last for some time. As I am willing to believe that we shall learn something by experience, I flatter myself that among the acquisitions which our Warriors will make they will reckon that of receiving surrenders in return. If not, the best thing we can do will be to turn unanimously disciples of George Fox and William Penn, and be conscientiously scrupulous against bearing arms.

If indeed the practice of surrendering were about to become a military fashion, as from the numerous examples of it which within the last two months I have almost had under my eyes, would seem probable, there might be reason to hope that War itself would lose some of its favour as the only occupation and amusement of mankind. In my last Letter I gave you a sketch of the situation at that time of *Napoleon the Great*. There is no Account yet that he has personally surrendered himself; but he has only saved himself by the swiftness of his flight, which on one occasion at least he was obliged to pursue in disguise. Of the immense host with which six months since he invaded Russia, nine-tenths at least are prisoners, or food

¹⁵ The disaster referred to occurred at Queenstown on the Canada side of the Niagara river, October 13. The retreat of the French army from Russia began the following week; and, October 25, Decatur, in command of the U. S. frigate *United States*, captured the British frigate *Macedonian*.

¹⁶ Sir Isaac Brock, K. C. B., in military command of the British forces in Upper Canada in 1812, and likewise provisional lieutenant governor of the Province, had attained the rank of Major General in June, 1811. An officer of energy and experience, he had captured Detroit, August 16. He was killed in the affair at Queenstown, October 13, following. Three days previously he had, because of his services at Detroit, been made an extra Knight of the Bath.

for worms. They have been surrendering by ten thousands at a time, and at this Moment there are at least one hundred and fifty thousand of them in the power of the Emperor Alexander. From Moscow to Prussia, eight hundred miles of road have been strewed with his Artillery, Baggage-Waggons, Ammunition-Chests, dead and dying men whom he has been forced to abandon to their fate. Pursued all the time by three large regular armies of a most embittered and exasperated Enemy, and by an almost numberless militia of peasants, stung by the destruction of their harvests and cottages which he had carried before him, and spurr'd to Revenge at once themselves, their Country and their Religion. To complete his disasters, the Season itself during the greatest part of his Retreat has been unusually rigorous even for this Northern Climate. So that it has become a sort of bye-word among the Common People here that the two Russian Generals who have conquered Napoleon and all his Marshals are General *Famine* and General *Frost*. There may be and probably is some exaggeration in the accounts which have been received and officially published here of the late Events; but where the realities are so certain and so momentous the temptation to exaggerate and misrepresent almost vanishes. In all human probability the Career of Napoleon's conquests is at an end. France can no longer give the law to the Continent of Europe. How he will make up his account with Germany, the victim of his former successful rashness, and with France, who rewarded it with an Imperial Crown is now to be seen. The transition from the condition of France in June last to her present State is much greater than would be from the present to her defensive campaign against the Duke of Brunswick in 1792. A new Era is dawning upon Europe. The possibility of a more propitious prospect is discernible; but to the great disposer of Events only is it known whether this new Revolution is to be an opening for some alleviation to human misery or whether it is to be only a variation of Calamities.

It is not without some Satisfaction that I have had the opportunity of being so near a witness to the great and decisive Events of the year now ending. It has been full of moral and political instruction. To the Russian armies and Generals it has also been a great military School; so great indeed as not altogether to leave reflection unconcerned what future uses may be made of what they have learnt; but as military instruction is of little use to me I have only had in this respect the opportunity to observe the general features of the Campaign. Its results have presented nothing new. The Fabian system, which succeeded in our Revolutionary War, which Lord Wellington has with equal success adopted in Spain and

Portugal and which even in this Country had triumphed a Century before over Charles the twelfth of Sweden has again been signally triumphant over the *Hero* of the present age; but his errors have been so gross and flagrant that their consequences so fatal to himself can teach nothing to the military Student but what had been taught a thousand times before. It is not the present Disasters, it is the continuance of his former successes, which may hereafter excite the astonishment of posterity. * * * * *

* * * * * "I have already mentioned that the season has been unusually rigorous. In the course of this month of December, we have had seventeen days in succession with Fahrenheit's thermometer almost invariably below 0. I now write you at that temperature, and notwithstanding the stoves and double windows my fingers can hardly hold the pen. The Sun rises at a quarter past 9 in the morning, and sets a quarter before 3 in the afternoon; so that we must live almost by Candle-light. We are all literally and really sick of the Climate. It is certainly contrary to the course of Nature, for men of the South to invade the Regions of the North. Napoleon should have thought of that. So should the visitors of Upper and Lower Canada—The Romans to be sure—but they were exceptions to all general rules."

J. Q. A. to Mrs. John Adams.

ST. PETERSBURG, 30 January, 1813.

* * * * * "Another month is drawing to a close, since I last wrote you, and I remain without a line from you or from any of my friends in America. The last letter from you that I have received was dated in April of the last year. * * *

* * * * * "There are several Americans residing here, who continue to receive frequent letters from their friends at home. Through them and through the English Newspapers we collect the information of the most important events occurring on our side of the Water, and sometimes intelligence respecting persons of our friends or acquaintance. It is thus that we have seen the President's Message to Congress at the Commencement of the Session. Its view of the State of our affairs is upon the whole, cheering, though I cannot but lament the remoteness of the prospect which it presents of our restoration to Peace.

The English Government and Nation have been told, and have probably believed that Mr. DeWitt Clinton would be elected President instead of Mr. Madison, and that he would instantly make peace with England upon English terms. Of the real issue of the Election we are here not yet informed; though accounts from the United States have reached us to

late in November, and they lead us to expect Mr. Madison's re-election.¹⁷

I never entertained very sanguine hopes of success to our first military efforts by land. I did not indeed anticipate that within six months from the Commencement of the War they would make us the scorn and laughter of all Europe, and that our National Character would be saved from sinking beneath contempt, only by the exploits of our Navy upon the Ocean. Blessing upon the names of ISAAC Hull and Decatur, and their brave Officers and Men! for enabling an American to hold up his head among the Nations!¹⁸—The capture of two British frigates successively, by American ships but little superior to them in force has not only been most profoundly felt in England, but has excited the attention of all Europe. It has gone far towards wiping away the disgrace of our two Surrenders in Canada. I believe if the English could have had their choice they would rather have lost Canada the first Campaign, than their two frigates as they have lost them. I hope and pray that the effect of these occurrences upon the national mind in our own Country will be as powerful as it has been in England, but with a different operation. After the news of the *Guerriere's* capture, I saw an Article in the *Times*, a *Wellesley Paper*, written evidently under the impression of great alarm; and explicitly declaring that "a new Enemy to Great Britain had appeared upon the Ocean, *which must instantly be crushed*, or would become the most formidable Enemy to her naval supremacy with "which she ever had to contend." We must rely upon it that this will be the prevailing sentiment of the British Nation. That we must instantly

¹⁷ The Presidential election of 1812, occurring in the midst of the war with England, was closely contested. James Madison was a candidate for re-election, representing the so-called Republican party. De Witt Clinton of New York was the candidate of the Federalist party. A change of twenty electoral votes would have turned the scale. The Federalists in Massachusetts had a majority of 24,000, and the Peace party swept the Congressional districts throughout New England and New York. Madison, however, received 128 votes in the Electoral College, out of a total of 217.

¹⁸ The name Isaac was in this letter underscored and emphasized for an obvious reason:—"No experience of history ever went to the heart of New England more directly than this (*Constitution-Guerriere*) victory, so peculiarly its own; but the delight was not confined to New England, and extreme though it seemed it was still not extravagant, for however small the affair might appear on the general scale of the world's battles, it raised the United States in one half hour to the rank of a first-class Power in the world.

"Hull's victory was not only dramatic in itself, but was also supremely fortunate in the moment it occurred. The *Boston Patriot* of September 2, which announced the capture of the *Guerriere* announced in another column the melancholy intelligence of the surrender of General Hull and his whole army to the British General Brock. Isaac Hull was nephew to the unhappy General, and perhaps the shattered hulk of the *Guerriere* which the nephew left at the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean, eight hundred miles east of Boston, was worth for the moment the whole province which the uncle had lost, eight hundred miles to the westward." (Adams, *United States*, VI, 375-76.)

be crushed upon the Ocean—and unless our Spirit shall rise and expand in proportion to the pressure which they can and will apply to crush us, our first success will only serve more effectually to seal our ultimate ruin upon the Sea.

The disproportion of force between us and Britain at Sea is so excessive that the very idea of a contest with her upon that Element has something in it of desperation. To her it is only ridiculous. Upon a late debate in the House of Peers, something having been said of the American Navy, Lord Bathurst, one of the Ministers, told their Lordships that the American Navy consisted of *five frigates*—and the House burst into a fit of laughter. These five frigates, however, have excited a sentiment quite different from laughter in the five hundred frigates of the British Navy; and if the American People will be as true to themselves as their little despised Navy has proved itself true to them, it is not in the gigantic power of Britain herself to *crush* us; neither instantly nor in any course of time, upon the Ocean.

Hitherto, Fortune, or rather with a grateful Heart would I humbly say Providence, has favoured us in a signal manner. But we must not expect that our frigates will often have the luck of meeting single ships a little inferior in strength to themselves, or of escaping from ships greatly superior to them. That they have not already all fallen into the Enemy's hands, is matter of surprize as well as of gratulation. Their situation during the present year will be still more critical than it has been the last, and as they have done honour to their Country by their conduct hitherto, I can only hope that their Country will in its turn feel the obligation of supporting them and their cause by exertions against which all the thunders of Britain will prove to be of no avail.

The first wish of my heart is for Peace. But the Prospects of Peace, both in Europe and America, are more faint and distant than they have been for many years. War has in the course of the year 1812 consumed in the North of Europe alone, at least half a million of human lives, without producing the slightest indication in any of the parties engaged in it of a disposition to sheathe the sword." * * *

J. Q. A. to Thomas Boylston Adams.

ST. PETERSBURG, 31 January, 1813.

* * * * * "The English Government have *declared* a blockade of Chesapeake Bay and Delaware river. New York, and the Coast of New England they leave open. They follow Captain Henry's advice; just as at the beginning of our Revolutionary War, they disfranchised Boston in favour of Salem.

The Spirit of 1775 seems to be extinct in New England,¹⁹ but I hope the profligacy of British policy will not be more successful now than it was then.

The War between us and them is now reduced to one point—IMPRESSMENT!—A cause for which we should not have commenced a War, but without an arrangement of which our Government now say they cannot make Peace. If ever there was a *just* cause for War in the sight of Almighty God, this cause is on our side just. The essence of this Cause is on the British side *Oppression*, on our side *personal liberty*. We are fighting for the *Sailor's Cause*. The English Cause is the *Press-gang*. It seems to me that in the very Nature of this Cause we ought to find some resources for maintaining it, by operation upon the minds of our own Seamen, and upon those of the Adversary's. It is sometimes customary for the Commanders of Ships to address their crews, on going into action; and to inspirit them by motives drawn from the cause they are called to support. In this War, when our Ships go into action, their Commanders have the best possible materials for cheering their men to extraordinary exertions of duty. How the English Admirals and Captains will acquit themselves on such occasions I can easily conjecture. But I fancy to myself a Captain telling them honestly that they are fighting for the Cause of Impressment. That having been most of them impressed themselves, in the face of every principle of Freedom, of which their Country boasted, they must all be sensible how *just* and how *glorious* the right of the Press-gang is, and how clear the right of practising it upon American Sailors as well as upon themselves must be. I think they will not very readily recur to such arguments.—No doubt they will keep them at their guns with others. But there may be times and occasions upon which the English Seaman may be made to understand for what he is to fight in this War, and when it may have its effect upon the Spirit with which he will fight. The English talk of the *Seduction* practiced by us upon their Seamen. There is a seduction in the very Nature of this Cause, which it would be strange indeed if their Seamen were insensible to it. I have heard that many of their Seamen taken by us have shown a reluctance at being exchanged, from an unwillingness to be sent back to be im-

¹⁹ In the presidential election of 1812 Vermont alone of the New England States threw its electoral vote in favor of Madison. New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut voted for DeWitt Clinton, the candidate of the Federal party. Clinton carried every electoral district of Massachusetts, the total popular vote being 50,333 for the Clinton electors and 26,110 for the Madison electors. In the Union at large, the South voted in favor of Madison, most of the North in favor of Clinton. The vote of Pennsylvania,—25 for Madison—decided the election. New York threw its 29 electoral votes for Clinton.

pressed again. A more admirable comment upon the character of the War could not be imagined. Prisoners who deem it a hardship to be exchanged! With what heart can they fight for the principle which is to rivet the chains of their own servitude?

I have been reading a multitude of speculations in the English Newspapers, about the capture of their two Frigates *Guerriere* and *Macedonian*. They have settled it that the American forty fours are line of battle-ships in disguise, and that henceforth all the frigates in the British Navy are to have the privilege of running away from them!²⁰ This of itself is no despicable result of the first half-year of War. Let it be once understood as a matter of course that every single frigate in the British Navy is to shrink from a contest with the large American frigates, and even this will have its effect upon the Spirits of the Tars on both sides. It differs a little from the time when the *Guerriere* went out with her name painted in Capitals on her fore top-sail, in search of our disguised line of battle-ship *President*.²¹

But the English Admiralty have further ordered the immediate construction of seventeen new frigates, to be disguised line of Battle ships too. Their particular destination is to be to fight the Americans. Their numbers will be six to one against us, unless we too taking the hint from our success can build frigate for frigate and meet them on their own terms; in which case if our new ships are commanded and officered, and manned like the *Constitution* and *United States* and

²⁰ A circular to British naval officers was at this time issued by the Secretary of the Admiralty. It read as follows: "My Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty having received intelligence that several of the American ships of war are now at sea, I have their Lordships' commands to acquaint you therewith, and that they do not conceive that any of his Majesty's frigates should attempt to engage, single-handed, the larger class of American ships, which, though they may be called frigates, are of a size, complement and weight of metal much beyond that class and more resembling line-of-battle ships.

"In the event of one of his Majesty's frigates under your orders falling in with one of these ships, his captain should endeavor in the first instance to secure the retreat of his Majesty's ship; but if he finds that he has an advantage in sailing he should endeavor to manoeuvre, and keep company with her, without coming to action, in the hope of falling in with some other of his Majesty's ships, with whose assistance the enemy might be attacked with a reasonable hope of success.

"It is their Lordships' further directions that you make this known as soon as possible to the several captains commanding his Majesty's ships." (*The Croker Papers*, I, 44.)

In a paper prepared by him on the American Navy, Rear-Admiral French Ensor Chadwick pronounces this "the finest tribute ever paid any navy." (*Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society for November, 1912*, vol. 46, pp. 207-208.)

²¹ This incident resulted from what was known as the affair of the *Little Belt*, already referred to. It was alleged at the time that the commander of the *President* had mistaken the *Little Belt* for the *Guerriere*, and consequently the Captain of the *Guerriere*, it is said, subsequently had the name painted as indicated in this letter, in order that in future there should be no possibility of mistake. See Adams, *United States*, vii, 14.

Wasp,²² I am persuaded they will in process of time gain one step more upon the maxims of the British Navy, and settle it as a principle that single English ships are not to fight Americans of *equal* force. This much I believe it will be in their power to do. And further I wish them never to go. I hope they will never catch the insolent affectation of seeking Battle against superior force,—An English pretension which has been so well chastised in the fate of their two frigates.

Our Navy, like all our other Institutions, is formed upon the English model. With regard to the Navy at least the superiority of that model to all others extant is incontestible. But in the British Navy itself there are a multitude of abuses against which we may guard, and there are many improvements of which it is susceptible, and for which the field is open before us. Our three 44 gun ships were originally built not as the English pretend for line of Battle ships, but to be a little more than a match in force to the largest European Frigates, and the experience both of our partial War with France, in 1798, and 1799 as well as of our present War with England has proved the wisdom of the principle upon which they were constructed. It has been a great and momentous question among our Statesmen whether we should have any Navy or not. It will probably still be a great question, but Great Britain appears determined to solve all our doubts and difficulties upon the subject. She blockades our Coast, and is resolved to crush us instantly upon the Ocean. We must sink without a struggle, under her hand, or we must have a Navy.”

* * *

J. Q. A. to John Adams.

ST. PETERSBURG, 15 February, 1813.

* * * * * “The War in the North of Europe is for the present at an end. The dissolution of the Emperor Napoleon’s Army is so complete, that the Russians, who have entered Prussia and the Duchy of Warsaw, advance even in the depth of an extremely severe Winter, without finding an Enemy to oppose them. They go as friends and deliverers, and say they are everywhere received as such; with joy and triumph. Napoleon has been now nearly two Months at Paris, where a popular fermentation menacing the whole foundation of his Government is said to be not very secretly working. A Peace

²² Reference is here made to the engagements between the frigates *Constitution* and *Guerriere*, August 19; between the frigates *United States* and *Macedonian*, October 25; and between the *Wasp* and the *Frolic*, both eighteen-gun sloops of war, October 17,—all in 1812. The *Wasp* was commanded by Captain Jacob Jones of Delaware. The action lasted forty-three minutes, was desperately fought, and resulted in the capture of the *Frolic*.

and Alliance both with Austria and Prussia is expected here, and the Negotiations though not public are believed to be far advanced. The Emperor Alexander is with his army in the Duchy of Warsaw."

J. Q. A. to Mrs. John Adams.

ST. PETERSBURG, 18 February, 1813.

"As I shall probably not have an opportunity of dispatching letters for America, after that of which I now avail myself, at least before the expiration of the present Month, and as I am unwilling to break through the rule which I prescribed to myself of writing to you, at least once every Month, I sit down to repeat to you, what only three days since I wrote to my father, namely, that I have not seen the hand-writing of any one of my friends at Quincy dated later than last April."

* * * * * "The War against the United States, appears to be now approved and supported by all parties in England; for the original Opposition to the present Administration, very weakly and very unjustly pledged themselves, to join Ministers upon this point of their policy, *if the Revocation of the Orders in Council should not satisfy the Americans*. And now the Ministers and their friends hold them to their word. Some of their Parliamentary leaders are as wrong headed, and stiff-necked in support of the Press-gang as the Ministry themselves, and the others dare not avow the disposition to compromise this point, because John Bull among his whimsies has taken it into his head that his Trident is at Stake upon the question; and they think he will look with an evil-eye upon any one who advises him to abandon it. Cobbett is the only politician among them who has boldly and explicitly told his Nation that they never can have a solid Peace with America while they practice Empressment on board of American Vessels at Sea. But Cobbett is out of favour with all parties, and since he began to speak the language of truth and justice and humanity has lost all credit with his Countrymen. As to the fragments struck off from the Ministry, by their internal collisions, such as Wellesley and Canning, who form what was once called in America a *Quid* party, they are among the bitterest of our Enemies, and having been themselves the principal Causes of the War, very consistently say that nothing can be more just than a War with America now. But they are not at all satisfied with the conduct of the War. The *Wellesley Gazette* (the *Times*) abuses the Ministry for not having blown the American Navy to atoms, and Canning abuses them in Parliament for not having ravaged our Coast with fire and sword. They say in answer to the first that they gave orders to their Admirals on the American Station to burn, sink and

destroy all American vessels before the War began, and that they have constantly had on those American Stations, a force equal to seven times the whole American Navy. In answer to Canning, they had the grace to say, not in Parliament, but in the *Courier*, their Newspaper, that to ravage our Sea-Coast with fire and sword would be trespassing a little upon the laws of War, and that it would be *spiteful*. But notwithstanding this we may be assured they will follow Mr. Canning's prescription, if they can.

The War against American Independence was for five years of its continuance one of the most popular Wars that the Nation ever waged; and it was seven before they could be convinced that they could not obtain by War the object of the War. Their real object in the present War is the dismemberment of the American Union. Their professed object is the Press-gang. The War for the Press-gang will be as popular as the War against American Independence was, untill we can convince them that they cannot obtain by War, the object of the War. Were it possible to conceive that the success of the War, upon the Ocean, would for seven years correspond to that of the first six Months, my hopes would be sanguine, that they would eventually be completely defeated in both their objects, and that we should finally succeed in ours. But this cannot be expected. If our Country could expend in three years as many dollars, upon naval force, as they expend Pounds Sterling in one, I should hold our success for infallible—but as it is the chances are too unequal. Providence may interpose in ways of its own to vindicate the righteous Cause, and I have had under my eyes the last half year a signal instance of such interposition. The Cause against the Press-gang is righteous if there ever was one since the hand of man was armed against oppression. The Cause of the Press-gang is doubly atrocious as a British Cause. Impressment, as a practice upon their own subjects and within their own Territory, not only brands the Nation with the mark of the most odious despotism, but gives the lie to every pretence of Freedom in their Constitution. And as if it were to show how far the absurdity of human iniquity could go, the Helots of Britain are their Sailors. The only Class of People subjected to the most unqualified servitude, robb'd of every right of personal liberty, kidnapp'd like African Negroes, without resource or relief in the tribunals of their Country, the out-laws of the Land, who have no Rights in the eyes of the Kings Judges, because they are stolen from their families, and employments, to serve the King, are precisely the Class of People who maintain with their blood the power, and dignity and glory, nay, as their oppressors say, the existence of their Nation. They

talk of our practising seduction upon their Sailors. The charge is false and ridiculous. But in *this* War, it would be strange indeed, if there were not seduction to their Sailors, in the very nature of our Cause. Our War is the Sailor's War; it is surely enough if they force their seamen to die in battle for the Press-gang. If their men are human beings their hearts must be on our side.

The War as far as the British professions can be trusted, is now reduced to this single point—What its issue will be must be left in the hands of him who scourges the vices and crimes of Nations by War, and who has sent this for our Chastisement as well as for that of our Enemies. At the thought of what my Country must suffer and go through before a rational prospect can open of her success in this Contest, my heart would sink within me, but for the reliance which I place in the divine goodness. There are great and glorious qualities in the human character, which as they can unfold themselves only in times of difficulty and danger, seem to make War from time to time a necessary evil among men. A Nation long at Peace seldom fails to become degraded. Symptoms of this species of Corruption were very visible in our Country. God grant that in suffering the unavoidable calamities, we may recover in all their vigour the energies of War!"

Mrs. John Adams to J. Q. A.

QUINCY, Feby 25, 1813.

"Upon looking over my list, I find that I have written to you a letter every month, since October. My last letter was in January 21st, written immediately after receiving yours of Sepbr. 21, informing me of the loss of your dear babe. I wrote to Mrs. Adams at the same time; the letters went in a cartel to Liverpool, through the kindness of a friend. * * * I inclose to you the result of the election for president and vice-president. I could fill a dozen pages with the political affairs of our Country, with the disasters of our *Irregular* Army, the causes which produced them, and the effects which have followed them. Much of this you will get from the English newspapers, with as much of truth and accuracy as a French Bulletin. I lament that much of what you ought to know cannot be communicated to you. The channel through which this letter must pass wholly forbids it. But one thing I will tell you, and let the loud clarion of fame proclaim to the world the laurels won and the victories achieved by our naval commanders. First in the triumph was Captain Hull in the frigate *Constitution*, who engaged and captured the British frigate *Guerriere*, making her a wreck, was obliged to blow her up. Capt. Jones in the *Wasp* sloop of war fought, dismasted,

and took the British sloop of war the *Frolic*. Afterward both were taken by a 74. Commodore Decatur in the frigate *U. S.* captured the British frigate *Macedonian*, and brought her safely into N. York altho at a vast distance from home. Commodore Bainbridge who took the command of the *Constitution* to enable Captain Hull to secure and make his own a prize, called the *Hart*, and for other private reasons; he suffered not the laurels won by Hull to fall upon his brow. He engaged, fought, and conquered the British frigate *Java*, but was necessitated to blow her up. Landed her officers and crew at St. Salvador, the Captain soon died of the wounds he received. I have been concise for time would fail me to detail to you how these conquerors have been received, and the honours which have been conferred upon them by Legislatures and public bodies in the various States. In spight of all British partialities, American Blood exults in the trophies won. Alas! Alas! our 74s are yet in embryo, were they as they ought to have been, upon the ocean the *Chesapeake* would not now be in a state of blockade by a British squadron. For with equal force we have proved that our Countries wrongs can and will be avenged, our loss has been comparatively small.

Tell it in Britain, proclaim it to the world, that the trident of Neptune has bowed to the valour and genius of Columbia, unless a speedy peace ensue, of which I see not any prospect. She is raising up a power, and a force which will humble her pride and share the ocean with her.

Unto that Being who governs the destiny of Nations let us ascribe the glory, and ask for his support and guidance in the war in which we have engaged.

I could tell you a tale which would raise your blood, would rouse your passions, would grieve your heart, and make you exclaim O my native State, how art thou fallen!

Degenerate sons, return, return or sink in oblivion! May the waters of Lethe pass over you!"

J. Q. A. to Mrs. John Adams.

ST. PETERSBURG, 27 February, 1813.

"At length, after another interval of nearly seven Months since I had been favoured with the sight of a line from any of my friends at Quincy, yours of 29 July has come to hand. It is nearly seven Months old, but is more than three Months later than your last previous letter. * * *

* * * * * I have seen the English Regent's Declaration of War, issued according to English custom, many Months after the War began. It is a mawkish compound of direct falsehood and sophistical prevarication, but so well suited to English Palates that a letter from London tells me that it has

made the War with America popular, though it was not so before. Mr. Bull is so mortified at having been taken in by Jonathan's Line of Battle-ships in disguise that he is actually cutting down seventy-four gun Ships, to disguise them into frigates too. A large Squadron under Lord Beauclerk is sent to reinforce the naval sea force in America, and *spiteful* as the idea of bombarding the American Seaports when Canning called for it in Parliament, was represented, it has not now been found reconcileable to the Laws of War, and is to be accomplished. We shall see what they will gain by that.

The success of the Russian arms, and the disasters of Lord Wellington, notwithstanding his famous Battle of Salamanca, have cooled the ardour in England for the cause of Spain. The noble Marquis went to Cadix to demand of the Cortes a new Military Organization of the whole Country, contrary to the Spanish Constitution, and he wrote a letter to his Officers telling them that his own army was the most disorderly and undisciplined army that he ever saw. In their retreat from Burgos, they committed such horrible excesses upon the Country of which they were the magnanimous and disinterested defenders that the People abhorred them worse than the French. They say it was to save themselves from perishing by famine. There is danger that they will abandon the Spaniards to their Fate; but I hope not so soon after reproaching us, while we have kept Spain, and their own Army there from starving, with ungenerosity, for not joining them in their martial Quixotism.

There is at present as little prospect of a general Peace in Europe as of a particular one, between the United States and England. The Russian Armies in Prussia and Poland have nothing now to do but to march forward. They meet no Enemy to oppose them. Warsaw is in their possession and Berlin will very shortly be so too;—Perhaps is already. Napoleon has a decree of his Senate, placing at his disposal 350,000 men, but a decree of the Senate does not make them. He has abated much of his *destinating* tone towards Russia, but apparently nothing of his pretensions."

J. Q. A. to Thomas Boylston Adams.

ST. PETERSBURG, 3 April, 1813.

* * * * * "The Continent of Europe is just commencing the progress of a Counter Revolution the end of which it is yet impossible to foresee. The frosts of Russia and Poland have struck at the roots of Napoleon's laurels and of his power. In September he entered Moscow as a Conqueror, and in March his Enemy took possession of his "good City" of Hamburg. All Germany is in combustion. Prussia has deserted his banners, and rallies all the remnants of her force under the

standard of Alexander. Denmark has implored Peace of England, her despoiler, and has been rejected. Austria negotiates and dissembles, and aims probably to join at last the new Coalition against her antient foe, and France has the most imminent prospect of being reduced at least to her ante-revolutionary dimensions, and perhaps to the restoration of the Bourbons. Nothing less than this is now intended; and between this design and its accomplishment there is now nothing but the life and the Genius of Napoleon to interfere. For his Fortune has deserted him; and of his Genius independent of his Fortune, I have never entertained a very exalted opinion. Caesar was once in perhaps as great a strait as he now is and extricated himself from it. But to extricate himself he must possess greater resources of genius than were employed by Caesar, and I do not yet believe that he has them to display."

J. Q. A. to Mrs. John Adams.

ST. PETERSBURG, 7 April, 1813.

"I know not whether it was generosity, or any other virtue, or merely a disposition to receive the postage, that induced the transmission of your favour of 30 December to Mr. Williams at London; for by him it was kindly forwarded to me, and on the first day of this month, to my inexpressible joy, came to hand. It was but so short a time before that I had received your letter of 29 July!—and excepting that, not a line from Quincy later than April of the last year. This last letter had apparently been opened, although the impression of your Seal upon the wax was restored—A circumstance which indicates that it was done in England, where they still affect the appearance of not breaking seals at the Post-Office. On this Continent they are less scrupulous about forms. When they open letters, they break the seals, and do not take the trouble of restoring them. They send them open to their address. It reminds me of an anecdote I have lately met with of Prince Kaunitz when he was prime Minister of the Empress Maria Theresa. One of his clerks whose business it was to copy the *opened* letters, coming to foreign Ministers at Vienna, in the hurry of reclosing a dispatch to one of the Envoys, sent him his copy instead of the original. The Envoy went to Prince Kaunitz, showed him the copy that he had received, and complained that the original was withheld from him. The Prince immediately sent for the Clerk, severely reprimanded him in the Envoy's presence for his blunder, and directed him to bring instantaneously the original despatch. The Clerk brought it accordingly, and the Prince gave it to the Envoy, with many apologies for the trouble occasioned

him by the Clerk's mistake, and assurances of his hope that it would never occur again.

In the *present* state of the Relations between us and Britain, I have nothing to say, if they open letters to or from me which they get fairly into their hands. But I should think it more creditable to them if they did not attempt the imposition of restoring the impression of the Seals. * * * *

* * * * * Of Peace, unless eventually produced by a course and through a channel at which I have already hinted, I now utterly despair. Our new 74's and frigates will only protract and obstruct every prospect of Peace. The prodigies performed by our Apology for a Navy (to call it a Navy is too ridiculous) have had the same effect—and so have our disgraces in Canada. There is a National Spirit among the British which such successes and such defeats grasp at with equal eagerness to unite all parties against us. We are a more virtuous and less vicious People than the British; but of that National Spirit which is a political virtue of the highest order, we have much less than they. Under our present Administration I have no fear that we shall subscribe to a disgraceful and degrading Peace, and from the temper of the British Government at this time, there is little expectation of any disposition in them for any other.

The conflagration of Moscow, and the sufferings of the Russian Empire under the formidable invasion of the last Summer were awful visitations of Heaven, but they have been succeeded by prosperities and successes without example in modern History. The iron Crown of Napoleon, and his Imperial Crown, too, will henceforth be but crowns of thorns to him. His Violence and Injustice are recoiling upon his own head. Russia, Poland, Prussia, and all the North of Germany are delivered from his power, and the Cities of Lubeck and Hamburg which had been formally annexed to the French Empire are already in Possession of the Russians. His internal Government is convulsed even at Paris, and the pretensions of the House of Bourbon are again advanced, under the patronage of the British Government, and perhaps of Russia. The situation of France has never been so precarious and in such imminent danger since the Duke of Brunswick's invasion of Champagne in 1792. And instead of universal monarchy, or even the preponderancy of power in Europe, she has now the prospect before her of being called again to contend for her antient boundaries. Whether the happiness of mankind or the Peace of the world will gain anything by this new Revolution in the affairs of Europe is yet among the secrets of Providence. That Russia should maintain and that Germany should recover their Independence; and that Spain, Portugal

and Italy should have the same good fortune in the South is undoubtedly desirable, but when Ambition is controlled only by Ambition, and one boundless lust of domination is only exchanged for another, Humanity gains very little by the substitution. At present Russia is the arbitress of Europe. Of her Wisdom and Moderation I am not inclined to doubt. She has gloriously stood the trial of Adversity, which was severe but short. She has now the stronger test of Prosperity to endure. The character of her Sovereign promises much for the relief of our species. I trust he will not catch the infection of Passions which would only prolong the scenes of horror and devastation that have so long been desolating Europe."

J. Q. A. to Mrs. John Adams.

ST. PETERSBURG, May 1, 1813.

* * * * * "I have already learnt from English Newspapers the arrival at New York of the Freeling Cartal in which Mr. Harris was a passenger. Whatever the President may determine concerning the dispatches of which he was the bearer, it will at least be decisive with regard to our prospects for the present year. That we should stay here is the least probable as well as the least desirable of the alternatives that I can anticipate. After my experience of four successive Russian Winters, I believe there is no person accustomed to mild climates, who would not be desirous of an opportunity to assure himself once more that in the changes of the seasons there is such a thing as Summer. We have formed no social attachments that can make us much regret the Country; and I have no employment here which can even afford me the consolation of being useful to my own.

On the Continent of Europe, the year upon which we have entered promises to be as eventful and threatens to be as sanguinary as its last predecessor. But the scene of action and the cause are totally changed. The dream of universal Monarchy in France, which may have tickled the imagination of the Corsican, and which has so hideously haunted the fancies of his Enemies is forever past. France will not soon again appear in the character of an invader. She is herself invaded. The Hanseatic Cities are already lost. Holland in a few Months, perhaps in a few weeks will share the same fate. Prussia, from the most subservient of her allies, has become the most exasperated of her Enemies. Denmark has deserted her and is before this numbered with her foes. Austria will in all probability very soon join the same side. A Swedish, Russian and British force commanded by a French General is destined to recover Hanover, and to restore Holland to the house of Orange; while at the same time Louis 18 has

issued a Declaration claiming anew the throne of France as his inheritance. To oppose all this Napoleon has little but the resources of a Genius, great only by success, and the remnant of a shattered military reputation. It is rumoured that he is collecting a large army upon the Rhine, but his troops will be mostly raw and inexperienced, and all of them disheartened. His present Disasters are so entirely imputable to himself that it can scarcely be said Fortune has abandoned him. There is so little in his personal character that can take hold of the affections of mankind that his destruction which is as certain as any human event that can be foretold, will leave no sympathizing feelings behind. But what will be the Fortunes of France, it is not so easy to foresee. If she takes back the Bourbons, she must take them from the hands of her Enemies. And with the Bourbons she must take conditions the most humiliating to her Pride; and at the price of sacrifices the most fatal to her Power. This is a point of view, by no means grateful to contemplation, but which cannot be overlooked. Louis 18 in his Declaration has promised to abolish the Laws of Conscription. A promise certainly well suited to the purposes of England; but which if accomplished, will make the Bourbons themselves when restored the mere puppets of foreign Powers, and France alternately a prey to all her neighbors.

The reflection of the present State of things upon our own concerns is not auspicious. In the Spring-tide of success which has flowed with such an impetuous torrent in favour of the English almost from the moment of our Declaration of War, they have been gathering spirit and inveteracy, and unanimity, so that now the language of all their parties is, that we must be *chastised* into submission. The loss of three frigates and of more than five hundred Merchant vessels in six Months has only stimulated them to revenge, and our shameful failures in Canada have made them perfectly secure in the only quarter where they could have any reason to fear us. They have blockaded all our Ports from the Mississippi to New York inclusively, and the rest I suppose will soon follow. I hope our Country will prove herself equal to the trial that awaits her.—Peace is not to be expected.

After a Winter more severe than I ever witnessed even in this Country we have had the compensation of an earlier Spring than is usual. The month of March was moderate and mild, and the river Neva broke up on the 11th of April New Style. We still have occasional frost and snow, but the Summer is always reckoned from the dissolution of the River. This Event has always before been peculiarly interesting to us, because it opened our direct Communications with America.

Every week brought numbers of our Countrymen, and intelligence from our friends was always fresh. Our prospects have changed, and we shall see nothing of the American flag this Season. The opening of the River is accordingly a matter of indifference to us."

J. Q. A. to Thomas Boylston Adams.

ST. PETERSBURG, 21 June, 1813.

* * * * * "*Le moment ou je parle, est déjà loin de moi.*"

This would be the proper motto for the History of Europe during the last twelve Months. The succession of Events has been as momentous and rapid as it ever was at any period in the annals of the world. On the 24th of last June Napoleon at the head of at least 300,000 men entered upon the Russian Territory—in September he was at Moscow. In December he reached Paris, almost literally alone, and his immense host were fattening the crows, and bleaching the frozen fields of Russia and of Poland. In March the Russians were at Berlin and Dresden, Hamburg and Lubeck. On the first and second of May he met them at Lutzen, and at this moment, if for want of better information, I can believe common Report, he is in or on the borders of Silesia, with an armistice concluded, and a Russian and a Prussian Plenipotentiary at his Camp. Prussia from his Ally has become his most inveterate foe. Austria I am very positively assured has made the same evolution. But whether she has actually commenced hostilities or not is a problem which time only can solve. The public here are assured in the Gazettes that she has; while in the same Gazettes other Articles affirm that she is in concert with him, to convoke a General Congress of all Europe and the United States of America, to negotiate a general Peace. Hamburg in the course of a month has passed successively into the hands of Russian, Danish, Swedish, Danish again, and finally French troops. Sweden with a French General at the Head of her army, is in English pay to invade France. Denmark has been wavering between France and the Coalition, ready to take the side of the allies; spurned back into the arms of France, and perhaps at this moment bombarded, and Congreve rocketed again into submission to the allies. All is yet a chaos of Confusion; through which the Elements are barely discernible of a plan attempted to be organized in concert between Russia, Sweden and England; and into which Austria, Prussia, and Denmark were to be drawn. Its first object was the dissolution of the Rhenish Confederation, and a reorganization of the German Empire. Then it would seem Holland was to be restored to the House of Orange, and the Bourbons were to have as much of old France as a dismemberment to be

limited by the moderation of the allies might leave her. The two Battles, of Lutzen, and of Bautzen,²³ though both officially declared here Victories of the allies, appear to have interposed some little obstacle to the immediate execution of this great plan. To the utter astonishment of all Europe, after a series of disasters which would have overwhelmed in irretrievable ruin the oldest and mightiest monarchy of the Globe, Napoleon returned to the field, as formidable as if no misfortune had befallen him. In the first Battle, he fought under great disadvantages, and with an inferior force. The victory was perhaps equivocal on the day of the battle, but the next day the Russians and Prussians retreated. Three weeks afterwards, having received a reinforcement of 30,000 men, they fought another Battle of three days, the 19th, 20th, and 21st of May; upon the first and second days of which they again claim the victory; but acknowledge a retreat on the third. A full Month has passed since the last event, and nothing official has been published here of subsequent occurrences. The rumor of an Armistice is very general, but the fact is not publicly acknowledged. It is not the custom here to publish any news but such as are agreeable. Of the consequences of the battle of Lutzen, nothing was known here until English Newspapers came, containing the French official Relations. From the postponement of public acknowledgement that an armistice has been concluded, it is supposed that it was only for a few days, and that a renewal of hostilities will ensue. Great reinforcements were marching to join the Russian army. Austrian troops were assembling in Bohemia, to join the allies; and the success of a last effort to whip Denmark into the ranks of the Coalition was to be waited for. We know not even the time to which the Armistice was limited. The Reports are 40 hours—3 days—15 days—40 days—and we know not where the headquarters of either of the armies were.”

J. Q. A. to Mrs. John Adams.

ST. PETERSBURG, 19 July, 1813.

* * * * * “There are many circumstances which indicate a probability that an effort is now making to effect a general Peace in Europe. In the course of the last Winter, after the tremendous Catastrophe of the immense army that

²³ Lützen, fought May 2, 1813, near Leipsic, Saxony, between the French under Napoleon and the allies, Prussian and Russian. The French greatly predominated in numbers, and claimed the victory; which, however proved fruitless.

Bautzen, fought May 21, 1814, between the allies and the French, at a point some thirty miles east of Dresden, and about one hundred and fifty miles from Lützen. It was another nominal French victory. In these two engagements the loss of Napoleon's army is computed as having been between forty and fifty thousand men.

had invaded Russia, Austria offered her mediation to all the belligerent powers, and from having been an auxiliary to France, assumed a neutral position. The mediation was immediately accepted by France. It was not positively rejected by the others, but was treated as subordinate to another Negotiation to draw Austria into the new Coalition against France. Whether Austria had really promised to join the Coalition, or had only held out flattering hopes which the sanguine temper of the times had received, as promises, certain it is that England, Russia, Prussia and Sweden did in the month of April expect with undoubting Confidence the Co-operation of Austria, to dissolve the Confederation of the Rhine; to recover Hanover and Holland; and to circumscribe France within her antient boundaries, if not even to restore the House of Bourbon. The Battle of Lutzen was claimed by both parties as a Victory, and was here celebrated as such by a *Te Deum*. But in its consequences it was the most important Victory ever won by Bonaparte—for it proved to all Europe that France was still able to cope with her Enemies, and even to make head against them. A second Battle three weeks after had a similar and more unequivocal result. Between the first and second Battles Napoleon had proposed that a Congress should be assembled at Prague in Bohemia, to which all the powers at War, including the United States of America, should be invited to send Plenipotentiaries for the purpose of concluding a general Peace; and he offered to stipulate an Armistice, during the Negotiation. After the second Battle, Russia and Prussia, with the concurrence of Austria, accepted the proposition for an Armistice, limited however to the term of six weeks, probably with a view to receive the answer from England, whether she should choose to be represented at the Congress or not. This Armistice is now on the point of expiring, but is said to have been prolonged for six weeks more. In the meantime Napoleon has quartered his army upon the Territory of his Enemy in Silesia, is levying a contribution upon Hamburg of about ten Millions of Dollars, is doubly fortifying all his positions upon the Elbe, and receiving continual reinforcements to be prepared for renewing an offensive campaign. He has made sure of the aid and support of Denmark and Saxony, and strongly confirmed Austria in her propensities to neutrality. If the War should be renewed his prospects, though infinitely below those with which he invaded Russia, last Summer, will be far above those with which he entered upon the present Campaign in April. If the Congress should meet he will not have it in his power to give the law to Europe; but the Peace must be the effect of reciprocal and important concessions.

There has nothing occurred since the commencement of the French Revolution which has occasioned such astonishment throughout Europe as this state of things. There are many examples in History of the extraordinary defeat and annihilation of immensely powerful armies. But the reappearance of a second overpowering host, within five Months after the dissolution of the first, is I believe without a parallel."

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J. Q. A. to Thomas Boylston Adams.

ST. PETERSBURG, 7 August, 1813.

* * * * * "There has been at Midsummer a feeble attempt, or perhaps it would be more correct to say, the pretence of an attempt for the negotiation of a general Peace in Europe. It immediately succeeded the unexpected issue of the two Battles of Lutzen and Würschen with which the Northern campaign of the present year commenced. Austria was with one hand offering the olive branch as Mediator, and with the other raising a most formidable armament to join the Coalition in an Alliance offensive and defensive against France. Her preparations were not quite completed, when Napoleon rushed into the field with so much precipitation and effect after the disasters of the last Winter. The two Battles had weakened and exhausted both the belligerent parties so much that a time for breathing from the work of butchery was necessary to both. Austria then in her mediating character talked of Peace. Napoleon very readily answered Peace. The allies strained so hard at the word that they have not yet distinctly pronounced it, but they agreed to an Armistice,—first for 30 hours—then for forty days, and finally for three weeks longer. The parties have all been employing the interval in preparations to renew the War, in which Austria is now said to be ready to take her part. The term of the Armistice is six days Notice from the 10th of August, but we are told the hostilities between France and Austria will begin before that date. They may have begun at the moment while I am writing. The English victory in Spain has doubtless hastened the resolution of Austria to drop the Mask of Mediation. The storm is now bursting upon France in all its fury. It is however so late in the Season, that no very important progress is likely to be made by either party, in the short remnant of the present Season. None of them will I believe be ambitious of another Winter Campaign.

We are anxiously waiting for intelligence from our own Country—the latest we have is the unpleasant account of the loss of the *Chesapeake* Frigate. As usual we receive it first in its English garb, which we suppose to be as all our experience war-

rants us in expecting, falsely coloured. It would be presumptuous to hope, and perhaps worse than idle to wish that in *every* contest with such an Enemy upon the Ocean we should be blessed with a triumph; but unless the English narratives of this affair are gross misrepresentations, there must have been some mismanagement or want of skill on our part, to which they were more indebted for the victory than to their prowess, or even to the unfortunate chances of War. The capture of the *Guerriere*, the *Macedonian*, and the *Java* were obviously accomplished by good conduct no less than by valour. I hope and believe that our gallant naval Warriors will not suffer themselves to be elated even by their unparalleled successes, into rashness—that in every defeat as well as in every victory they will find a lesson to make them more and more formidable to the foe. How formidable they are already needs no other proof than the riot of exultation which the news of the *Chesapeake's* capture excited in England. Among the many motives which I have for lamenting the War in which we are involved, I have one great source of consolation. There are energies in the Constitution of Man which a long protracted Peace always weakens, and sometimes extinguishes altogether. Occasional War is one of the rigorous instruments in the hands of Providence to give tone to the character of Nations. We had in America too much of “the cankering of a calm World and a long Peace.” As Providence has seen fit now to visit us with the Calamity of War, it behooves us all, and most especially those whose opinions and examples have the greatest influence over those of the Nation, to direct the public Spirit towards those Virtues which it is the peculiar attribute of War to display. Of these, cool and deliberate Valour is the first and closely connected with it is the persevering Fortitude “not to be overcome”—the steadfastness in adversity, which is superior to evil Fortune. We have a powerful, stubborn and insolent Enemy to deal with. The Event is with God—may it be the triumph of eternal Justice, and propitious to our Country!”

J. Q. A. to Mrs. John Adams.

ST. PETERSBURG, 23 August, 1813.

* * * * * “We are indeed never long without news of some kind or other from the United States; but the channel of its conveyance is such that it is not always welcome. The English Newspapers are always ready to tell us what we should desire not to know—they are seldom in haste to report anything that can be agreeable to us. We have had one opportunity of hearing directly from the United States since the arrival of the Envoys. A vessel was dispatched from New

York in June, probably with English Passports, to bring General Moreau to Europe. He arrived at Gothenburg, about the 25th of July, and proceeded from thence to the Emperor Alexander's Head-Quarters. A Mr. Swienin, a Gentleman attached to the Russian Legation in America, came with him, and brought letters and Gazettes to 22 June. We had already heard by the way of England of the loss of the *Chesapeake* Frigate²⁴—Prodigies cannot become objects of common occurrence. Our naval successes had so far exceeded all rational anticipation that we were in danger of being too much elated by them. The Fortune of War will maintain its supremacy and even where there is proportion between the forces of contending parties will favour sometimes one side and sometimes the other. Our Officers and Seamen have proved to us, and to the world, what they can and will do, if their Country will support them. But we are not to expect with five Frigates to make head permanently against the British Navy.

We still continue to furnish materials for the merriment of mankind upon the land.²⁵ At the commencement of the War of our Revolution we committed blunders, and met with disasters enough; but there was more excuse for them then than there is now. Our means and resources were incomparably less, and we had infinitely more to accomplish than we have at present. We did then learn the art of War in the school of misfortune. A whole Generation has since passed away, and we have the same unpalatable lesson to learn again. The school has amply proved itself to be the same—God grant that its severe instruction may not be lost upon us!

The armistice in the North of Europe, which was agreed upon at the beginning of June, has been successively prolonged

²⁴ The action between the frigates *Chesapeake* and *Shannon* took place off Boston Light, Sunday, May 30, 1813, resulting in the capture of the American frigate.

²⁵ Reference is here made to the badly conceived, inefficiently conducted and wholly futile military operations on the Northwestern frontier in Ohio and Indiana, and on the Lakes and upper St. Lawrence, during the early months of 1813. Thirty years had then elapsed since the close of the War of Independence; and, in 1813, the national military service was gradually freeing itself from the inheritance of traditions and superannuated incompetents handed down from, or survivals of that struggle. A younger and more energetic set of leaders, of whom Winfield Scott was typical at the North as was Andrew Jackson at the South, were coming to the front. Their presence made itself felt during the last half of 1813, and throughout later military operations. These operations are, historically speaking, now forgotten; but this correspondence is of value as illustrating contemporaneously the effect, on an American living abroad in an official capacity, produced by the performances of a small but efficient naval, and an equally small but inefficient military organization set suddenly in action under organic conditions traditional in the United States. Half a century later the country went through a similar experience on a vastly increased scale, working out results through an almost incalculable waste of money and human lives.

untill the 16th of this Month, and although a full week has elapsed since the expiration of that term, it is yet unknown here whether a further prolongation of it has taken place, or whether the hostilities have recommenced. The armistice itself was very generally disapproved, and the passion for the renewal of the War is extreme. As the co-operation of Austria is relied upon with certainty, the interval during which hostilities have been suspended was employed in securing it. You cannot be surprized at the bitterness and exasperation against the French, and especially against Napoleon, which prevails in this Country; and as his last Winter's disasters had inspired a very sanguine hope of his destruction, they are now very unwilling to relinquish it. The first operations were so much more energetic and successful than had been foreseen by any body that for a time they threatened the disappointment of his Enemies; but the English Victory in Spain, and the entrance of Lord Wellington's army on the French Territory²⁶ has revived every flattering expectation, and placed his fate and that of France again upon the Chapter of Accidents." * * * *

J. Q. A. to Mrs. John Adams.

ST. PETERSBURG, 21 September, 1813.

"This day two Months have elapsed since Mr. Gallatin and Mr. Bayard arrived²⁷ and delivered to me your favours of 5 and 23 April. Nothing later from you has yet come to hand. Very shortly after their arrival the ship *Hannibal*, belonging to Mr. Astor of New York arrived at Gothenburg. This vessel was furnished with a British licence with a permission even to bring a Cargo, and to carry one back in return—all in Consideration of a passenger whom she conveyed to Europe. The passenger was General Moreau. She sailed from New York the 22d of June, and he landed at Gothenburg the 25th of July. One of his fellow passengers who had a special charge to accompany him, wrote a letter to a friend here, which I have heard read, expressing an opinion that the voyage had been so short and prosperous, by the particular smiles of Providence upon the purpose for which he came. From Gothenburg General Moreau crossed the Baltic, and landed at Stral-

²⁶ Wellington had defeated the French at Vittoria, June 22d; and in the battle of the Pyrenees, August 4. He did not, however, cross the Bidosa, entering France, until October 7.

²⁷ In consequence of an offer of mediation between the United States and Great Britain made by Alexander II in March, 1813, Messrs. James A. Bayard, of Delaware, and Albert Gallatin of Pennsylvania, at the time Secretary of the Treasury in the Madison cabinet, were appointed special commissioners to carry on the proposed negotiation. They sailed from Newcastle, Delaware, May 9 and reached St. Petersburg, July 21. Mr. Adams was associated with them in the commission.

sund, where he had an affecting interview with the Crown Prince of Sweden, another French General now commanding an army against France. General Moreau then proceeded to the Emperor Alexander's Head-Quarters, and arrived at Prague, precisely at the moment when the two Emperors of Russia, and of Austria, were meeting to commence the Campaign of the new Coalition against Napoleon. This was the 15th of August. The 16th was the day upon which the Armistice was to terminate; and on the 10th the Austrian declaration of War against France had been delivered to the French Ambassador at Prague. On the 17th hostilities were to commence. General Moreau entered the Russian service, and was appointed first Aid de Camp General to the Emperor Alexander. On the 22d he wrote from the Emperor's Head-Quarters a letter, which I have read. It said that he had come to fight against Bonaparte, and that he should do it without the slightest repugnance. That if he contributed to the overthrow of Bonaparte he should have the thanks of France as well as of the rest of Europe. That if the Coalition had destroyed Robespierre, France would have thanked them for it. That the Banner is of little consequence when a man succeeds. Three days afterwards the allied Austrian Russian and Prussian main Army invaded Saxony from Bohemia, and on the 26th of August they were at the gates of Dresden. On the 27th Napoleon with 100,000 men went out from Dresden and gave them Battle. A Cannon-Ball took both the feet of General Moreau from under him, and shattered both his legs so that on the same day he was obliged to undergo the amputation of them both. The movements of the armies made it necessary to remove him in this Condition to Töplitz, where he died on the 2d of this Month, greatly regretted by the Sovereign to whom his services had just been devoted, and at whose side he fell.

He was in arms against his native Country. Although I do not Subscribe to the British doctrine of unalienable allegiance in the extent to which they wish to drive it in their disputes and Wars with us, I do consider that very great and weighty causes are essential to justify a Man for bearing arms against his native Country. That there were causes sufficient for his justification is to say the least extremely questionable. He probably was not formally bound in Allegiance to Napoleon, and might perhaps have cause of complaint against his Country. But from the time of his first participation in the intrigues to restore the Bourbons in 1795 and his accusation of Pichagru, with whom he had been concerned in them, I have always considered him as a man who thought success the only standard of virtue. This is always

the maxim of wavering, unsteady characters. It is a principle in itself so loose and unsettled that it almost always finishes by betraying those who confide in it. Moreau has often been heard to declare that he never would take up arms against France. He had declined proposals previously made to him, when the prospect of success was not so bright. With the change of his Country's Fortune, his aversion to fight against her disappears. He comes five thousand Miles to join the standard of her Enemies; and one of the first Cannon-Balls that is fired sends him to his Account, a memorable warning to others not to judge of the moral merit of the Banner, by success. Eight days after he was dead a long elaborate article in the *Gazette* of this City assured the world that *Providence* had preserved the life of Moreau through thousands of dangers, in Battles, through conspiracies, amidst plagues, and over Oceans, to make him the instrument of some great and extraordinary purpose of beneficence to mankind.

Providence did not intend to make him any longer the instrument of any purpose, either merciful or afflictive. But it has manifested in the most unequivocal manner the intention of turning the tide of success. If success were the standard of excellence what mortal since the Creation of the World had for a compass of twenty years such signal proofs of the favour of Providence as Napoleon. He too fancied himself more than mortal. He dreamt that he was the dispenser of destiny to mankind. It would seem that even yet he has not awaked from his dream. He left one immense army to fatten the region kites of Russia, and another is now perishing under his hands, by the sword of his Enemies and by famine. All Europe is now conjured against him. His inflexible Spirit has bid defiance to Austria, in addition to all those he had before. But his means of resistance are sinking under him, and since the renewal of the War he has been defeated in almost every quarter. His armies are disheartened. He is surrounded with disaffection and treachery. His Enemies are flushed with success; embittered by the remembrance of former losses, and struggling with desperation for their own existence. "What is it, (says the son of Sirach) if one be highly famed? yet is it known that he is but a man; neither may he contend with him that is mightier than he."

Mr. Gallatin and Mr. Bayard are still here, waiting for a definitive answer from England, whether the British Government will treat under the Russian Mediation or not. In the meantime the Accounts from America leave them in suspense and under an uncertainty whether the Senate have confirmed the nominations to this Commission. The news which we receive respecting the progress of the War is less favourable

than we had anticipated, and we hear of the opposition from Massachusetts in all its vehemence. I approve much of your principle never to despond, and hope for an improving futurity." * * * *

J. Q. A. to Mrs. John Adams.

ST. PETERSBURG, 25 October, 1813.

* * * * * "Although I am duly sensible to the gentlemanly politeness of Sir John Sherbrook,²⁸ in permitting my letters to be transmitted to you, I do not wish to give him the trouble to peruse any more of my Epistles, or to write any adapted for his perusal. Yet I see not why I should withhold my Opinions upon some of the subjects mentioned in your letters. For instance—

I am not of Opinion with the Senate of Massachusetts that the present War is waged on the part of the United States without justifiable Cause—as little am I of their Opinion that it has been prosecuted in a manner indicating that Conquest and Ambition are its real motives.²⁹ But if I concurred with them in both those Opinions, I should still from the bottom of my Soul disclaim the conclusion which the said Honourable Senate have drawn from it and declared to be their *sense*—to wit that it is not becoming a *Moral* and *Religious* People to express any approbation of Military or Naval Exploits, which are not immediately connected with the defence of our Sea-Coast and Soil.

A Moral and Religious People are bound in sacred duty to express approbation of military or naval exploits performed in their service even although the Senate of Massachusetts should think the War unjust—even though the War should be really unjust—provided that they who performed the exploits believed it to be just. The *Virtue* of all Action depends upon the motives of the actor, and it is neither moral

²⁸ Sir John Coape Sherbrooke, Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia. Subsequently (1816-1818) he was Captain General and Governor in Chief of Canada. At the time in question he was very active in the performance of his duties in connection with British military and naval operations in the war with the United States.

²⁹ Reference is here made to a report drawn up by Josiah Quincy, then a member of the Senate of Massachusetts, concluding as follows: "And to the end that all misrepresentations on this subject may be obviated,—

Resolved, as the sense of the Senate of Massachusetts, that in a war like the present, waged without justifiable cause, and prosecuted in a manner which indicates that conquest and ambition are its real motives, it is not becoming a moral and religious people to express any approbation of military or naval exploits which are not immediately connected with the defence of our sea-coast and soil."

The particular naval exploit in question was the engagement between the sloop-of-war *Hornet*, commanded by Captain James Lawrence, and the sloop-of-war *Peacock*, off the Demarara River, February 24, 1813. The *Hornet* had sunk the *Peacock* as the result of one broadside.

nor religious to take Mr. Quincy's opinion as to the Justice of the Cause for a standard to measure the merit of exploits achieved by Hull, Decatur, and Bainbridge. There is a Book much esteemed by moral and religious men, which says "who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own Master he standeth or falleth."³⁰ If I could degrade myself in my own mind, and sink deep enough into the kennels of faction to embrace the opinion that the redemption of my sea-faring Countrymen from the accursed oppression of British Press-gangs is *not* a justifiable cause of War, I should still think it possible that other men, quite as patriotic as myself might be of a different opinion. And when I saw such men displaying Heroic Virtue in support of their Country's Cause and sealing the sincerity of their belief with their blood, I should feel and would express approbation of their exploits, unless with the loss of all sense of my Country's Rights I had also lost all sense of Morals, Religion and Truth.

I had seen some weeks since in the English Newspapers this pious Resolution; but I never thought much of its ingenuity, even as a party measure—I knew very well that it could disgrace none but those who voted for it. I knew very well that if the exploits should continue to be achieved, the Moral and Religious People would not ask Mr. Quincy or the Senate of Massachusetts for permission to express their approbation of them; and if the deed of glory was performed, I cared very little whether Mr. Quincy or the Senate of Massachusetts expressed *their* approbation of it or not. The approbation which avowedly hangs the Virtue of one man upon the motives of another is too worthless to be an object of desire to men of real Honour, Morals, or Religion.

Since I began this letter, I have seen the *National Intelligencers* of 3 and 5 August containing all the proceedings of the U. S. Senate upon the nominations to the Russian Mission; and the projected Mission to Sweden. The situation in which these transactions place us is a little awkward; but we have yet no official information of the Event. We have no reason to expect that the British Government will treat at all under the Mediation; but Mr. Gallatin and Mr. Bayard have hitherto been waiting here for a final answer from England, which has not yet been received. They have at their disposal the ship in which they came and intended to send her round to Gothenburg before the freezing of the river here. Her departure has however been so long delayed that it is not certain she will now be able to get away. We have the ground already covered with snow, and Fahrenheit's thermometer at

³⁰ Romans xiv, 4.

ten degrees below the freezing point. Four of five days of such weather will lock us up for the winter." * * * *

J. Q. A. to Mrs. John Adams.

ST. PETERSBURG, 19 November, 1813.

* * * * * "Since the renewal of the War in Germany the odds of force have been too decisive against the French, and the catastrophe of their Army has been nearly equal to that of the last year. Napoleon himself has been defeated and overpowered by the four combined armies of Austria, Russia, Prussia and Sweden, and on the 19th of October escaped from Leipzig leaving his ally the king of Saxony a Prisoner, more than twenty of his Generals, and forty thousand men also prisoners, and 400 pieces of Cannon, Ammunition, baggage, etc., in proportion to the conquerors. All his other German Allies have deserted him and taken side against him; the Austrians are advancing in Italy, and Lord Wellington with his English, Spaniards and Portugese, are invading France from the Pyrenees." * * *

J. Q. A. to Mrs. John Adams.

ST. PETERSBURG, 17 January, 1814.

* * * * * "Your letter of 14 July is still the latest date that I have directly from the United States. The only intelligence that we receive from home is that which comes to us in the English Newspapers; and how much of that is falsehood or misrepresentation we infer not only from the general character of all paragraph-news in the British Prints, but from the lies which they have told about ourselves. Some time ago, they stated that the American Envoys had asked to go to the Emperor Alexander's Head-Quarters, and had been refused—the Emperor alledging that there were no suitable accommodations for their Excellencies. Since then they have asserted that Lord Walpole had declared to this Government that the British Ministry having rejected their Mediation would be well pleased that the American Envoys should be dismissed, and that he was instructed to say so. Both these paragraphs are totally unfounded. We have good reason to conclude that almost all their news from America is equally distorted from the truth. They have not been able however to suppress the Event of the naval Action upon lake Erie.³¹ I have not seen Commodore Perry's account of that affair, but it has been published in the English Papers, and Sir George Prevost's letter announcing it to his Government contains a Circumstance

³¹ The naval battle on Lake Erie, known as "Perry's victory," took place September 10, 1813.

certainly not intended by him to honour his Enemy, but to which the annals of English Naval glory will not readily furnish a parallel. He says that he has the knowledge of the facts, only from the American Commodore's Dispatch, published in the American Papers.—That he himself has no official Report of it, and can expect none for a very long time, the British Commander and all his officers having been either killed or so disabled that there was not one left to tell the tale.

This same Sir G. Prevost, and Sir James L. Yeo, the British Commander on Lake Ontario, in their official Reports, have charged Commodore Chauncey's squadron with want of spirit. I believe it to be a mere Hectoring Bravado on the part of Yeo, and I pray as fervently as Sir George himself that Yeo may have had his opportunity of meeting Chauncey, and not the opportunity of running away from it. We have the account of Proctor's retreat, and a Report that his whole force excepting himself and about fifty of his men had been destroyed or taken. But of this hitherto no official confirmation.

From the style and tone of Sir G. Prevost's dispatches I suspect he has very much exaggerated the forces of Gen. Wilkinson, Hampton and Harrison, opposed against him. If he has not, they ought before this to have given a good account of him and his Province. But experience has taught me to distrust our land-operations, and I wait with an anxiety predominating over my hopes, the further accounts that must soon be received concerning them.

One of the advantages which we may derive from this War, (and from so great an evil we ought to extract all the good we possibly can) is that of acquiring military skill, discipline, and experience. No Nation can enjoy Freedom and Independence without being always prepared to defend them by force of Arms. Our military incapacity when this War commenced was so great that a few more years of Peace would have extinguished every spark of martial ardour among us. All our first attempts upon Canada were but sources of humiliation to us. The performances of the year just now elapsed, so far as we know them, have certainly been less disgraceful, and in some particulars have been highly honourable;—there is yet much room and much occasion for improvement. God grant that it may not be lost.

If I fill the pages of my letters to you with *American News*, it will indicate to you the subject nearest my heart. The great Scenes of action in Europe are now so remote from this Country that the knowledge of them will reach the United States nearly as soon as we receive it here. After all the bloody Tragedies which have been acting on the face of Europe these two and twenty years, France is to receive the Law and Con-

stitution from the most inveterate of her Enemies. She abused her hour of Prosperity to such Excess, that she has not a friend left to support her in the reverse of her Fortune. What the present Coalition will do with her is yet very uncertain; but there is no question in my Mind that they will do with her what they please. * * * * * "We have during the last three weeks a thorough sample of the Russian Winter; and one of the coldest days ever known at St. Petersburg. Fahrenheit's Thermometer was $35\frac{1}{2}$ degrees below ($67\frac{1}{2}$ below the freezing point) at 6 in the Morning. 32 below 0 at 2 P. M. with a bright Sunshine, and 37 below 0 at 10 in the Evening. Mr. Bayard begins to think it colder here than at Wilmington. We are all well."

J. Q. A. to A. A.

ST. PETERSBURG, 1 February, 1814.

* * * * * "Just before Messrs. Gallatin and Bayard took their departure the weather became moderate, and has continued so ever since. As they are travelling South, towards more merciful climates they have had the most favourable time that this Winter has afforded to get beyond the reach of its rigours. For five and twenty days before they left us, with the exception of six or eight hours, one day, the thermometer had been lower than the extremest cold that I had witnessed in three Winters at Washington. It was the longest and the severest succession of Cold that I have ever known even here. I hope and trust that it was the Heart of the present Winter, and that henceforth we may expect a milder temperature. The Month of January has indeed according to our uniform experience been the most trying part of the Season in respect to the cold; because it is then unremitting. Before and afterwards there are many sharp nights, and occasional severe days. But not for three weeks at a time. In December there is more darkness than Cold; and in February the influence of the Sun begins to be felt. For the two Circumstances which make it possible for human life to exist in a State of the atmosphere which freezes quick-silver, are that the sky at such times is invariably clear, and the air a perfect calm.

Since I wrote you last we have no American news whatsoever. But of European news there is a great abundance, and a very rapid succession. The allies after making Propositions to France for the Negotiation of Peace, and acknowledging the neutrality of Switzerland have nevertheless entered France by the way of Switzerland; taken possession of Geneva, and undoubtedly, before this, of Lyons. They are also in possession of the whole Province of Alsaca, and Lord Wellington main-

tains himself in the neighbourhood of Bayonne. The decrees for raising the new Conscriptions in France have in many places failed of Execution, and that Country after having been twenty years the terror of Europe, appears now so destitute of all means of self-defence that it is falling almost without an effort of resistance into the hands of the coalesced Powers. As they have adopted among themselves one of the most inflammatory of the Revolutionary heroes, they have learnt from him to talk the language of the Revolution, and while they are carrying fire and the sword into the heart of France, they proclaim themselves the best of all possible friends to the French People, and making the extermination of Bonaparte the great and only pretence for continuing the War. Denmark has been compelled to make her Peace, by the Cession of Norway to Sweden, in return for which she receives Swedish Pomerania. It is something like the exchange of armour between two of Homer's Heroes—a shield of brass for a shield of gold. Homer says that the one who gave the golden shield was struck at the moment with a fit of Folly. But his translator, Pope, makes it a fit of generosity. Denmark however in this transaction has to charge herself neither with folly nor generosity. Necessity, dire Necessity, has been her motive and must be her justification. She has been plundered for the benefit of Europe's Independence." * * * *

J. Q. A. to Thomas Boylston Adams.

ST. PETERSBURG, 24 January, 1814.

* * * * * "The Events of the last two years opened a new prospect to all Europe, and have discovered the glassy been acquired by Wisdom, it might have been consolidated by Time and the most ordinary portion of Prudence. The Emperor Napoleon says that he was never *seduced* by Prosperity; but when he comes to be judged impartially by Posterity, that will not be their sentence. His Fortune will be among the Wonders of the age in which he has lived. His Military Talent and Genius will place him high in the Rank of Great Captains; but his intemperate Passion, his presumptuous Insolence, and his Spanish and Russian Wars, will reduce him very nearly to the level of ordinary Men. At all Events he will be one of the standing examples of human Vicissitude—ranged, not among the Alexanders, Caesars and Charlemains, but among the Hannibals, Pompeys and Charles the 12ths. I believe his Romance is drawing towards its close; and that he will soon cease even to yield a pretext for the War against France. England alone will be "afraid of the Gunpowder Percy, though he should be dead." ³²

³² Henry iv, Part i, Act v, Scene 4.

J. Q. A. to Mrs. John Adams.

ST. PETERSBURG, 30 March, 1814.

* * * * * "From the continual chain of unexpected and unexampled success, which has been attending the British Cause in Arms, and in Negotiation from the hour that their War with us commenced, we have anything to anticipate but a spirit of concession in them. They have little to boast of in the progress of their War with us hitherto, but the chances of War have all turned up prizes to them everywhere else. France after having been twenty Years the Dictatress of Europe has now in the course of two Campaigns been brought completely at the feet of those Enemies whom she had so often vanquished and so long oppressed. Six weeks ago an allied army of at least three hundred thousand men was within two days easy march of Paris, and by the latest Accounts received from thence, was again within the same distance, or nearer. In the interval they had met with some opposition which occasioned a momentary check upon their Operations, and a short retreat to concentrate their forces. There is little reason to doubt that they are at this moment in possession of Paris, and that the Empire of Napoleon is in the Paradise of Fools. While the Allies were in the Heart of France a Negotiation as hypocritical and fallacious as the Congress of Prague, was affected to be opened at Chatillon, without any intention perhaps on any side, certainly not on the side of the Allies, that it should result in a Peace. Their object is in giving Peace to France to make her at the same time a present of the Bourbons, but even in the extremity to which France is reduced there have been very few and trifling manifestations of a disposition in any part of her People to receive them.

As I am in daily expectation of receiving the order to repair to Gothenburg, I may possibly be there as soon as this Letter, or be obliged to take it on there with me. It is now of the whole year the worst time for undertaking the Journey, and the passage of the Gulph between this and Sweden will probably for some weeks be impracticable. It is however very doubtful whether I shall be able to go before the breaking up of the Sea; in which case I shall endeavour to get a passage directly by Water. But the Navigation from hence is very seldom open before the first of June." * * * *

J. Q. A. to Mrs. John Adams.

ST. PETERSBURG, 26 April, 1814.

* * * * * "It was but yesterday that the official news of the taking of Paris by the allies was received and this Evening there is a splendid Illumination of this City for that Event.

The Emperor Alexander has proclaimed for himself and the allies that they will never treat again for Peace with Napoleon Bonaparte or any of his Family. That they will acknowledge and guarantee the Constitution which France shall give herself; and will grant more favorable terms of Peace to her under Government than they would have done to Bonaparte. It is impossible to deny that this man has deserved his fate, and that no fate can be too severe for what he has deserved. The humiliation that he has so wantonly brought down upon this Nation may be a useful lesson to them, and a security for the rest of Europe. But I take no pleasure in witnessing the last Agonies of a Great Man, hunted to Death by Millions of little ones; nor in seeing a Nation like France forced to take a Constitution and a Sovereign at the dictate of her most inveterate Enemies. And I wait for some confirmation of fact, to judge in what the Moderation, the Generosity and the Magnanimity of the Allies towards France will terminate."

J. Q. A. to Mrs. John Adams.

REVAL, 12 May, 1814.

* * * * * "The Coalition of all Europe against France has at length been crowned with complete success. The annals of the World do not I believe furnish an example of such a reverse of Fortune as that Nation has experienced within the last two years. The interposition of Providence to produce this mighty change has been so signal, so peculiar, so distinct from all human co-operation, that in ages less addicted to superstition than the present it might have been considered as miraculous. As a Judgment of Heaven, it will undoubtedly be considered by all pious Minds now and hereafter; and I cannot but indulge the Hope that it opens a Prospect of at least more Tranquility and Security to the civilized part of Mankind than they have enjoyed the last half Century. France for the last twenty-five Years has been the scourge of Europe; in every change of her Government she has manifested the same ambitious, domineering oppressive and rapacious Spirit to all her Neighbours. She has now fallen a wretched and helpless victim into their hands—dethroning the Sovereign she had chosen, and taking back the family she had expelled, at their command; and ready to be dismembered and parceled out as the Resentment or the Generosity of her Conquerors shall determine. The final Result is now universally, and in a great degree justly imputable to one Man. Had Napoleon Bonaparte, with his extraordinary Genius, and transcendent military talents, possessed an ordinary portion of Judgment or common Sense, France might have been for ages the preponderating Power in Europe, and he might have transmitted

to his Posterity the most powerful Empire upon Earth, and a name to stand by the side of Alexander, Caesar and Charlemagne—A name surrounded by such a blaze of Glory as to blind the eyes of all humankind to the baseness of its origin and even to the blood with which it would still have been polluted. But if the Catastrophe is the work of one Man, it was the Spirit of the Times and of the Nation, which brought forward that Man, and concentrated in his person and character the whole issue of the Revolution. "Oh! it is Sport, (says Shakespear) to see the Engineer hoist by his own petard." The sufferings of Europe are compensated and avenged in the humiliation of France. It is now to be seen what use the avengers will make of their Victory. I place great reliance upon the Moderation, Equity, and Humanity of the Emperor Alexander, and I freely confess I have confidence in Nothing else. The allies of the Continent must be governed entirely by him, and as his resentments must be sufficiently gratified by the plenitude of his success and the irretrievable downfall of his Enemy, I hope and wish to believe that he has discerned the true path of Glory, open before him, and that he will prove inaccessible to all the interested views, and rancorous passions of his associates. The great danger of the present moment appears to me to be that the policy of crippling France to guard against her future power will be carried too far. Of the dispositions of England there can be no question; of those which will stimulate all the immediate neighbours of France there can be as little doubt; and France can have so little to say or to do for herself that she begins by taking the Sovereign who is to seal her doom from the hands of her Enemies. The real part for the Emperor Alexander now to perform is that of the *Umpire* and *Arbitrator* of Europe. To fill that part according to the exigency of the Times, he must forget that he has been the principal party to the War; he must lay aside all his own Passions, and resist all the instigations of his co-operators. He must discover the true Medium between the excess of liberality which would hazard the advantages of the present opportunity to circumscribe the power of France within bounds consistent with safety and tranquillity of her neighbours, and the excess of Caution, which the Jealousy of those neighbours, and perhaps his own would suggest, to secure them at all Events, by reducing France to a State of real Impotency; and thus leaving her future situation dependent upon their discretion. I have no doubt that the Emperor will see all this in the general principle; and I wait not without anxiety to observe its application to his measures." * * *





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